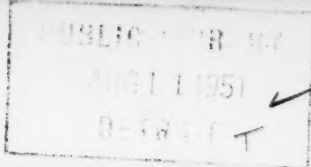


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THE MUSIC REVIEW



August 1951

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Some Notes on the Scarlattis

BY

FRANK WALKER

I

"Pietro Alessandro Gaspare Scarlata"

It seems that the full Christian names and the original form of the surname of the composer who signed himself "Alessandro Scarlatti" are in danger of being again confused or forgotten. All such particulars are normally given in the musical encyclopaedias and their omission in Scarlatti's case is no doubt due to the fact that the sources of information are so scattered. Ulisse Prota-Giurleo, in his privately-printed *Alessandro Scarlatti "il Palermitano"* (Naples, 1926), established that Palermo was the composer's birthplace, but did not himself go to Sicily to discover the actual date of birth from the parish registers. This was first ascertained by Paolo Dotto, published by him in the *Giornale di Sicilia* (Palermo) for 3-4 Sept., 1926, and reprinted by Guido Pannain in a review of Prota-Giurleo's pamphlet in *Rivista musicale italiana* in 1927. The entry refers to "Pietro Alessandro Gaspare Scarlata",¹ born on 2nd May, 1660, and baptised next day. It is interesting to recall that Professor Dent, in 1905, had already remarked that "if he was of Sicilian origin, his real name was probably Sgarlata or Scarlata, both fairly common in Sicily then and now".

In *Musica d'oggi* for November, 1935, Paolo Dotto, the original discoverer of the true date of birth, reprinted the relevant entries from the registers of the parish of San Antonio Abate, Palermo. But why did he entitle his article: "Gaspare A. Scarlatti il palermitano"—putting the third Christian name first and omitting the first altogether? In the same periodical for Aug.-Sept., 1939, the same writer again confused matters in the same way ("Gaspare Alessandro Scarlatti"). Why?

II

The Migration to Rome and Naples

Eight Scarlattis of the older generation are known, including the great Alessandro. As seen above, we know him to have been born at Palermo on 2nd May, 1660; the history of the gradual emergence of the facts concerning his brothers and sisters, from the mists of ignorance, doubt, suppositions and downright lies, is of great interest and has, it seems, its lesson for us even today, after the successive labours of Dent, Prota-Giurleo, Dotto, Fienga, Luciani and Tiby.

Alessandro's sister Anna Maria has acquired a certain notoriety owing to two dubious episodes in the family history (a belated attempt to save her

¹ " . . . infantem natum heri ex Petro et Eleonora Scarlata jugalibus huius parociae cui impositum est nomen Petrus, Alexander, Gaspar."

reputation is made below). Dotto thought he had discovered Anna Maria's correct date of birth in an entry concerning one "Anna Maria Antonia Diana", born at Palermo on 8th February, 1659, almost exactly nine months after the parents' marriage. Recently Ottavio Tiby has made a much more careful and thorough search through the parish registers of Palermo and has found that this Anna Maria Antonia Diana died at the age of eight months on 28th October, 1659, and that there was a second daughter named Anna Maria, born on 8th December, 1661.² Tiby has also established the correct dates of birth of the sister Melchiorra Brigida, and of the brothers Vincenzo Placido, Francesco Antonio Nicola and Antonio Giuseppe; he has failed only to find that of the youngest of the family, Tommaso, but, unfortunately, for the history of the family and its supposed migration from Sicily the date of birth of Tommaso is most important.

Vincenzo Placido, born at Palermo on 15th October, 1665, had never been heard of before Tiby's researches and nothing whatever is known about him. Antonio Giuseppe, born at Palermo on 15th January, 1669, according to Tiby, also "passed through life without leaving any trace", but he is surely identifiable with the brother Giuseppe mentioned in a document concerning Alessandro's household in Rome in 1681,³ and possibly also with the Giuseppe Scarlatti who figures as "engineer and painter" in the *libretto* of Domenico Scarlatti's second opera *Giustino*, performed in the Royal Palace, Naples, on 19th December, 1703.⁴

For information about Melchiorra, Francesco and Tommaso we are chiefly indebted to the researches of Prota-Giurleo in Neapolitan archives. Here is a summary of the documentary evidence from this source concerning the early lives of these members of the Scarlatti family:

Melchiorra. In statements made prior to her marriage in May, 1688, Melchiorra declared that she left Palermo in 1672, aged about nine, for Rome, where she stayed for ten years, until 1682, when she came to Naples. She had been six years resident at Naples and was aged about twenty-five. Melchiorra supplied official confirmation of her statement concerning her stay in Rome. The *Curia Romana*, in an accompanying document, vouched for the fact that she had lived in Rome from June, 1672, to September, 1682.

Thus, if we accept her own figures, Melchiorra was born at Palermo about 1663. It seems certain that she came to Rome in June, 1672.

Francesco. In a disposition prior to his marriage in 1690, Francesco said he was about twenty-two years of age, a native of Palermo, and had been brought as a boy of six or seven to Naples, where he had resided for sixteen years, never having left the city.

According to this, Francesco was born at Palermo about 1668 and came to Naples about 1674 or 75.

² "La famiglia Scarlatti" in *Journal of Renaissance and Baroque Music*, June, 1947. The date of birth of Anna Maria is correctly given in the text, but misprinted 18th December in the genealogical table. The date of birth of her brother Vincenzo Placido is misprinted 10th (instead of 15th) October, 1665, in the genealogical table.

³ Pasquale Fienga, "La véritable patrie et la famille d'Alessandro Scarlatti" (*Revue musicale*, Jan., 1929).

⁴ Claudio Sartori, "Gli Scarlatti a Napoli" (*Rivista musicale italiana*, Fasc. V, 1942).

Tommaso. In a statement relative to Anna Maria's second marriage in February, 1699, Tommaso declared that he was aged twenty-two, born at Palermo, and came to Naples so young that he did not recall anything about it. Before his own marriage on 30th May, 1701, he said he was about twenty-four, and had lived at Naples since infancy, never having left the city.

Thus, according to his own accounts, Tommaso was born about 1677 and was brought to Naples, say, between 1678 and 1682.

Alessandro himself, on the occasion of the second marriage of Anna Maria, in February, 1699, stated that he and Anna Maria left Palermo together for Rome, where they lived for seven or eight years, before he left her in Rome "with other relatives of ours" and came to Naples. We know from other sources that Alessandro came to Naples at the end of 1683 or in 1684, so if he only lived in Rome seven or eight years he and Anna Maria came together from Sicily in 1676 or 77. This is quite impossible, and, as Professor Dent has suggested,⁵ it seems certain that Alessandro gave false information on this occasion owing to his sister's desire, at her second marriage, to pass herself off as younger than she really was. One of the documents says: "The bride . . . confesses to have only twenty-nine years". She was thirty-seven.

The accuracy of the statements of Melchiorra and Francesco can now be checked, since Tiby has discovered their precise dates of birth. Melchiorra, born at Palermo on 5th October, 1663, is seen to have told the truth, and Francesco, born there on 5th December, 1666, to have not been far out in his estimate of his own age. Tiby blames him, saying that in his marriage documents in 1690 he declared he was about 22, when in fact he was 24, "whence one sees that it is not only women who make mistakes about their age!" But this is rather superficial and takes no account of Francesco having been born at the end of 1666 and having married at the beginning of 1690 (the precise date is unknown, but his first child was born on 23rd December of the same year). He was, in fact, just 23, which is not far removed from "about 22". It seems to have been not uncommon at this period for people to be unaware of their precise birthdays. Perhaps the "name-day" was celebrated instead, but as Francesco probably grew up as an inmate of one of the Neapolitan Conservatorii it is unlikely that much fuss was made of him on either occasion.

What of Tommaso? Tiby, having failed to find the registration of his birth or baptism, falls back on the formula "born at Palermo between 1669 and 1672" for this youngest of the Scarlattis, the latter date depending on the generally accepted account of the family's migration from Sicily. According to this the father, Pietro

"left Palermo in 1672 with his . . . children, and established himself at Rome; the two youngest sons, Francesco and Tommaso, were not taken to Rome, but left at Naples, where both remained until they were grown up. This suggests that Pietro or his wife may have had relatives at Naples, who would take charge of them".⁶

Now Melchiorra's statement is consistent in itself and supported by an official declaration, so we may be certain that she, at any rate, came to Rome in

⁵ "New Light on the Scarlatti Family" (*Monthly Musical Record*, Nov., 1926).

⁶ Professor Dent in *Grove*.

June, 1672. Alessandro must have been there at about the same time, if he was, as tradition has it, a pupil of Carissimi, who died on 12th January, 1674. He himself says Anna Maria came with him. Therefore it does seem likely that Alessandro, Anna Maria and Melchiorra came to Rome together in June, 1672, probably to stay with those "other relatives of ours". The parents, however, would seem *not* to have come, for Tommaso's statements imply that he was born at Palermo in 1677. There seems no reason why *he* should have lied about his age. If he was actually born prior to the supposed general migration of 1672 he must have been under the impression that he was twenty-two when he was actually, at least, twenty-seven, and according to Tiby's formula, anything between twenty-seven and *thirty*. This is hard to believe. Tommaso's two statements are so difficult to reconcile with the accepted story that they have been quietly ignored and a suitable date of birth fabricated for him. The process began with Prota-Giurleo. He produced the entry concerning his death: "A primo agosto 1760. Tomaso Scarlato morì d'anni 95 . . .". This gives the impossibly early date of 1665 for his birth. So Prota-Giurleo concluded that the parish priest was not well informed or that he wrote 95 in error for 85, giving 1675 for the birth. (We shall see shortly how untrustworthy these parish records are in this matter.) In the booklet edited by S. A. Luciani on the occasion of the Scarlatti Festival at Siena in 1940 Tommaso's birth is given as 1665 in one place and 1675 in another; Della Corte and Gatti give 1675; *Grove*, *Blom*, *etc.* give *c.* 1670, which seems to be a convenient way of bringing him into line with the rest and with the theory of a general migration in 1672. But this is only done by ignoring Tommaso's own statements.

The Neapolitan relatives, unlike the Roman ones, are purely hypothetical. It seems almost certain that Francesco and Tommaso came to Naples, not to stay with relatives, but to enter one of the Conservatorii—to which, having been born in the Kingdom of Naples, they had the right of entry (the Conservatorio dei Figliuoli Dispersi at Palermo had not yet begun to provide a musical education for its inmates). Knowing now precisely when Francesco was born, we can see that his statement implies that he was sent to Naples between the end of 1672 and 1674, though of course he may easily have been a little out in his reckoning; Tommaso would seem to have followed considerably later, say between 1678 and 1682, possibly as an orphan after the death of his parents in Sicily. (Nothing is known about the parents' deaths, except that the father was dead when Alessandro got married.) Di Giacomo⁷ noted an entry in the registers of the Conservatorio di Sant' Onofrio at Naples, concerning shoe repairs for one "Scarlatti" in 1689. The reference is probably to Tommaso.

One may surmise that the parents were poor and that those of the children with evident musical gifts were sent to places where they could be best developed. For the Scarlattis there were two such places—Rome, where they had relatives, and Naples, where free education for poor male children

⁷ *I quattro antichi Conservatorii musicali di Napoli*, Palermo, 1924-28.

was available in the Conservatorii. It may seem unnatural for the parents to have dispersed their children in this way, but it is unwise to assume that the seventeenth-century attitude in such things was the same as our own. The letters of Salvator Rosa, for example, show a positively Chinese harshness: if the child was a male he kept it; if it was a female it went straight into the foundling hospital. And, in any case, even those who hold (without evidence) that Pietro Scarlatti accompanied his elder children to Rome must admit that he sent the younger ones to Naples.

III

A Matter of Dates

Before the discovery of the precise date of his birth, Alessandro Scarlatti was held to have been born in 1659, or possibly 1658, on the evidence of the statement of his age at death engraved on his tombstone. The baptismal register showed this not to have been far out. But in general these estimates of ages on tombstones and, particularly, in parish registers of deaths seem to have been the results of the merest guesswork. The death certificate of Anna Maria Scarlatti says she was "about 40" when she was actually almost exactly 42; that of Melchiorra says she was "about 82" when she was actually 73; that of Tommaso, as seen above, says he was 95 when he was (probably) 83. Pietro, Alessandro's eldest son, was said to be "about 66" when he was actually 71, and Pietro's daughter Anna "about 62" when she was, in fact, 68. Outside the Scarlatti family we find many other examples. Leo's death certificate says he was 47 when he was really 50. The register with the entry of the Neapolitan librettist Pietro Trinchera's death says he was 47 when he was actually nearly 53. These are not exceptional cases. The only such entry known to me which *is* correct is that of the painter Bernardo de Domenici, brother of Gian Paolo de Domenici, an early Neapolitan *opera buffa* composer, but it should be noted that he was born and died in the same parish.⁸

It should become recognized that back-calculations from statements of ages in death certificates of Italians are a very untrustworthy method of arriving at the dates of birth. The dictionaries are still full of them, but they are easily detected. (Precise date of death, but only the year of birth given.) The case of Vinci is curious. *Two* registers of deaths in Naples have entries concerning Vinci and they are both different.⁹ One says that he was 40; the other that he was "about 34". The accepted date of birth, 1690, is probably a back-calculation from the first of these and is probably wrong. As Professor Dent pointed out long ago,¹⁰ if he was born in 1690 he would have

⁸ Ulisse Prota-Giurleo, *Nicola Logroscino "il dio dell'opera buffa"*, Naples, 1927. Prota-Giurleo accepts unquestioningly the evidence of such death certificates wherever he has not been able to find the registration of birth. Many of the estimates of ages in entries concerning deaths *appear*, therefore, to be accurate, until it is realized that the dates given are drawn from these entries themselves.

⁹ The reason for the double entry is that the Neapolitan parish of San Giovanni Maggiore was originally very large; later five new parishes were formed, but until 1738 entries continued to be made both in the new parishes and in San Giovanni Maggiore for the whole of its original territory.

¹⁰ "Notes on Leonardo Vinci" (*The Musical Antiquary*, July, 1913). The same argument is also advanced by A. Camatti in "Leonardo Vinci e i suoi drammi in musica al Teatro delle Dame" (*Musica d'Oggi*, Oct., 1924).

been twenty-nine when his first-known work, the oratorio *La Protezione del Rosario*, was performed in 1719, and that is very late for a fairly prolific Neapolitan composer to begin his career. The production of an oratorio was almost *de rigueur* for pupils of the Neapolitan Conservatorii on the conclusion of their studies at the age of twenty or twenty-one. Arguing on these lines, it seems likely that Vinci was actually born about 1698 or 99.

IV

A Libel on Anna Maria

Alessandro Ademollo, in his book on the Roman theatres, and Professor Dent, in his study of Alessandro Scarlatti, quote, from the *Avvisi di Roma* of 15th February, 1679, a passage concerning a brawl that took place between the Pope's Swiss guards and the lackeys of Cardinal Colonna, when the latter, in attendance on Queen Christina of Sweden, wished to enter the Collegio Clementino, where Scarlatti's *Gli equivoci nel sembiante* was being performed. "It is commonly known", say the *Avvisi*, "that the composer of the music of the said comedy, a Sicilian, is in very bad odour with the Court of the Vicar on account of the secret marriage of his sister with an ecclesiastic". It was assumed that this was Anna Maria, because at the time she was the only known sister of Alessandro, but since then Prota-Giurleo has introduced us to Melchiorra and it may equally well have been *this* sister who incurred the displeasure of the Papal authorities ("marriage" is here probably a relative term). It is true that Anna Maria was the elder sister and Melchiorra aged only fifteen years and four months, but that is quite old enough for a Sicilian girl, outside parental control, to have got herself into trouble. The point is that the charge against Anna Maria is not proved.

One is all the more inclined to give Anna Maria the benefit of the doubt in the case of this Roman episode on discovering that she has been foully libelled with regard to certain events in Naples five years later. Alessandro owed his appointment as *maestro di cappella* of the Royal Chapel, Naples, to the fact that one of his sisters was the mistress of Don Giovanni de Leone, Secretary of Justice to the Viceroy. On the day of his appointment old Provenzale, the second *maestro*, who apparently expected to get the job himself, resigned, and six of the singers of the Royal Chapel left with him.¹¹ Subsequently the whole affair was brought to public notice, Don Giovanni and his friend the Governor of Pozzuoli, together with a favourite page, were relieved of their offices and disgraced. Alessandro retained his position but his sister and her fellow *puttane comedianti* were ordered either to leave the city or to betake themselves to a convent. They chose the latter alternative, but this is, of course, not to say that they took the veil! It would be absurd to suppose that the nuns, even of Naples, were recruited in this fashion.

The description of these ladies as *puttane comedianti*, taken in conjunction with the fact that Anna Maria is known to have made at least one appearance

¹¹ Di Giacomo, *op. cit.*

on the stage,¹² and her presumed identification with the sister of Alessandro who was in trouble in Rome in 1679, have sufficed to persuade everybody that it was she to whom he owed his Neapolitan appointment in 1684. Protagiurleo failed to see that the documents he discovered implicated rather *Melchiorra*. We have proof that Melchiorra came to Naples from Rome in September, 1682; it is fairly clear (see the list of his children's births below) that Alessandro did not go to Naples with Melchiorra. He was probably there first for the performance of *Psiche* at the Royal Palace on 23rd December, 1683, for the birthday of the queen-mother Marianna. It is very likely that he stayed on for the production of *Pompeo* in February, 1684, at the Palace and Teatro San Bartolomeo, and decided to make his home there on being offered the post in the Royal Chapel, through the influence of his sister. Alessandro himself states clearly that when he came to Naples he left Anna Maria in Rome "with other relatives of ours". His appointment as *maestro di cappella* to the Royal Chapel dates from 17th February, 1684. Anna Maria, supposing that she followed him to Naples (there is no evidence for this), would have had to be a very rapid worker to have installed herself in so short a space of time into a position of such influence; whereas Melchiorra had been nearly eighteen months at Naples. In the absence of any evidence at all that Anna Maria was in the city the case against Melchiorra looks very black.

V

Alessandro's Children

Two articles by Pasquale Fienga, with new information about the Scarlatti family, have appeared in French translations in the *Revue Musicale*.¹³ Alessandro's children are listed by Fienga thus:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) Pietro Filippo, | b. Rome, 5 Jan., 1679 |
| (2) Benedetto Bartolomeo, | b. Rome, 24 Aug., 1680 |
| (3) Flaminia Anna Catarina, | b. Rome, 10 Apr., 1683 |
| (4) Cristina Eleonora Maddalena, | b. Rome, 6 Apr., 1684 |
| (5) Alessandro Raimondo, | b. Rome, 23 Dec., 1684 |
| (6) Giuseppe Domenico, | b. Naples, 26 Oct., 1685 |
| (7) Giuseppe Nicola Ruperto, | b. Naples, 17 Feb., 1689 |
| (8) Caterina Eleonora Emilia, | b. Naples, 15 Nov., 1690 |
| (9) Carlo Francesco Giacomo, | b. Naples, 5 May, 1692 |
| (10) Giovan Francesco Diodato, | b. Naples, 7 May, 1695 |

The first of these came into the world just less than nine months after the marriage. Numbers three and four have just less than a year between them. This was good going—but even better, according to the accepted records, were Alessandro's achievements in the year 1684. Number five was born only eight months after number four! This is, I am informed, just physically

¹² In Agostini's *Il ratto delle sabine* at Venice in 1680. The identification of this "Signora Anna Maria Scarlatti" as Alessandro's sister was a bold guess, at a time when the names of his sister or sisters were unknown. She might easily have been no relation at all. But in fact a bull's eye was scored with this shot in the dark.

¹³ "La véritable patrie et la famille d'Alessandre Scarlatti" (Jan., 1929) and "Giuseppe Scarlatti et son incertaine ascendance directe" (Feb., 1932).

possible—provided Alessandro showed no consideration at all for his wife and provided also that the birth was a very premature one. But Alessandro was appointed *maestro di cappella* of the Royal Chapel, Naples, on 17th February, 1684, and had probably gone there rather earlier. It is understandable that his wife should not have travelled to Naples before the birth of number four, but inexplicable that she should have remained in Rome and given birth there again in December, 1684. That the family had in fact been transferred to Naples after the birth of number four is shown by the death at Naples of number two on 21st August, 1684. Further, the numbers quoted by Fienga from the registers of births of the same church in Rome are, for numbers three, four and five, respectively 696, 769 and 588. There is certainly an error here. Number five must fit in between numbers two and three, and his likely date of birth would seem to be 23rd December, 1681.* There is no room for anyone to be born on 23rd December in any other year. Furthermore that would be a likely date, judging only from the sequence of numbers in the registers of birth. So Alessandro Raimondo becomes number three and the others shift down one.

VI

Alessandro Scarlatti at Urbino

An article by B. Ligi, "La Cappella Musicale del Duomo d'Urbino", in *Note d'archivio* (Rome) for Jan.-Dec., 1925, gives a list of the *maestri di cappella*. They include: "1705 10 Feb.—1708 28 Oct., Pietro Scarlatti da Roma". This is not only an addition to our scanty knowledge of the career of Pietro, Alessandro's eldest son,—it provides a reason for Alessandro's own visit to Urbino in 1707.

VII

The Scarlattis and the origins of Neapolitan comic opera

Claudio Sartori in "Gli Scarlattis a Napoli" (*Rivista musicale italiana*, Sept.-Oct., 1942) has some fascinating speculations about the possibility that Alessandro had a good deal more to do with the early stages of Neapolitan comic opera than has been hitherto thought. Sartori succeeds in pushing back the date of the first-known Neapolitan comic opera (*La Cilla*) to 1706. Among other early works in this style are *Lo Spellacchia* (1709) with music by Tommasiello de Mauro and another musician who did not wish to be named: "Lo primmo e terzo Atto l'ha fatto n'auto Vertoluso, che non vo essere conosciuto, pe n'essere nommenato . . ."; *Le fenziune abbentorate* (1710) with Tommaso Scarlatti among the singers; *Li vecchie coffejate* (1710) also with Tommaso Scarlatti; and *Lo Petrachio* (Aversa 1711),¹⁴ by Francesco Scarlatti, who signs the dedication in the *libretto* together with Nicola Pagano, who was the husband of Melchiorra Scarlatti, and who was apparently on this

* Confirmed for the author by Maestro Ottavio Tiby from the registers after this article had been set in type. Alessandro Raimondo was born in 1681 [Ed.].

¹⁴ Mentioned in print for the first time by Sartori; the British Museum has a copy of the *libretto*.

occasion the impresario. Quite a family affair! Sartori points out that the libretto of *Lo Petrachio* includes two characters who do not speak in Neapolitan dialect and that at least two of their *arias* have words that appear in Alessandro's opera *Gl'inganni felici*. He suggests that Alessandro provided the music for all the fifteen *arias* not in dialect and that he was the musician who did not wish to be named in *Lo Spellachia* and also in *Patrò Calienno de la Costa*, another early Neapolitan comic opera (1710) with references in the libretto to an anonymous "azzellente autore".

This brilliant piece of imaginative research by Sartori is yet another instance of the need to re-examine the older findings in the light of more recent discoveries. Croce, more than fifty years ago, noted that one Nicola Pagano was impresario of the Teatro dei Fiorentini, Naples, in 1708. Prota-Giurleo, more than twenty years ago, discovered that Melchiorra Scarlatti married Nicola Pagano, then a musician of the Royal Chapel, "professore di viola e di contrabasso", in 1688. But until Sartori's article no-one had connected these two facts.

In addition to Nicola Pagano, the husband of Melchiorra, the second husband of *Anna Maria*, Nicola Barbapiccola had also tried his hand at theatrical direction. On his marriage he was the owner of the good ship *San Giuseppe*, of the Neapolitan squadron. But in 1703-04 he was impresario of the Teatro San Bartolomeo, and responsible for the production there of *Giustino*, an early opera by Domenico Scarlatti, and of Pollaroli's *Irene*, with additions (thirty-three *arias*) by Domenico. Croce also mentions Pagano. In 1708 he was Royal Naval Contractor at the Naples Arsenal, and a passion play was performed several times at his house during Lent of that year and repeated elsewhere in 1709 under his direction.

There is another interesting aspect of the varied activities of the Scarlatti family in the Neapolitan operatic world. In 1702 Alessandro was still *maestro di cappella* of the Royal Chapel at Naples, but in June of that year he obtained permission to visit Florence, together with Domenico, his brilliant son. Domenico returned to duty at Naples, but Alessandro did not, and on 25th October, 1704, Gaetano Veneziano was appointed in his place. Then, as is well known, in 1705 Alessandro insisted on Domenico also leaving Naples ("Io l'ho staccato a forza da Napoli", he told Ferdinando dei Medici). Sartori puts forward an ingenious theory that in absenting himself from his post Alessandro hoped that Domenico's talents would shine all the more in isolation and that he would be appointed *maestro di cappella* in place of his father. It seems more probable that personal and perhaps political animosities were responsible. After the arrival of the Austrians, Alessandro was re-appointed *maestro di cappella* in December, 1708, by the new Viceroy, Cardinal Grimani, although this meant that the existing *maestro*, Francesco Mancini, had to be deposed and persuaded to accept a post as *vice-maestro*. It is fairly clear that from the very first Alessandro was at loggerheads with his Neapolitan colleagues. The circumstances of his original appointment, through his sister's influence with a dissolute official, over the head of Provenziale, must have turned men against him from the start. In his brief connection with the Conservatorio di Santa

Maria di Loreto, as in his long association with the Royal Chapel, he ignored contracts and limited leaves of absence whenever they became inconvenient to him. It looks very much as if from 1702 his adversaries made Naples too hot to hold him. Then, after a change of government, the favour of Cardinal Grimani permitted his return in 1708 and he at once turned the tables. He secured posts in the Royal Chapel for his friends. New operas of his appeared regularly once more at the Teatro San Bartolomeo (none had been seen there since 1702). And once Alessandro was again in control of the Neapolitan scene, all his relatives flourished with him. Pietro gave up his position at Urbino and hurried back to Naples, where he became supernumerary organist (1708) and later (1712) first organist of the Royal Chapel. Tommaso, whose last (and first) recorded appearance as an operatic singer had been in Domenico's revision of Pollaroli's *Irene* in 1704, returned to the stage in 1710 in two of the Neapolitan dialect comedies which had developed during Alessandro's absence. He obtained, later, a position in the Royal Chapel. What we may call, if we accept Sartori's theory, Alessandro's attempt to infiltrate into even this seemingly exclusively Neapolitan fortress occurs at the same time (1709-10). Melchiorra's husband launches out as an operatic impresario (1708) and produces Francesco's opera at Aversa (1711).

VIII

Domenico (?) and Francesco in England and Ireland

A few years ago it was commonly held that Domenico Scarlatti came to England from Rome in 1719 and stayed here at least until May of the following year, when an opera of his, *Narciso*, was performed in London. Very determined efforts were also made by W. H. Grattan Flood¹⁵ to show that the "Signior Scarlotti" for whose benefit a concert was given in Dublin in 1741 was, in fact, Domenico Scarlatti, and that he afterwards returned to London. Modern opinion tends more and more to reject the idea that the composer ever visited either England or Ireland.

If *Narciso* had been a new opera by Domenico, as was long thought, there would have been good grounds for supposing him to have been present at the first performance. But we know now that it was only a version of *Amor d'un'ombra e gelosia d'un'aura*, first produced in Rome in 1714, with additional *arias* composed for the London performance by Thomas Roseingrave, who is said by Burney to have brought the score to this country. Some evidence that Roseingrave was back in this country by 1718¹⁶ and already active in

¹⁵ "Dublin 'City Music' from 1456 to 1786" (*S.I.M.G.*, XI, 1909-10), "Domenico Scarlatti's visit to Dublin, 1740-1" (*The Musical Antiquary*, April, 1910) and "Eighteenth Century Italians in Dublin" (*Music and Letters*, July, 1922). The article in *The Musical Antiquary* was not actually written by Grattan Flood, but compiled from his notes.

¹⁶ As Chrysander pointed out in his Handel biography, a letter from Prior to Swift, dated from Paris, 16th August, 1713, shows that Roseingrave returned from Italy to Dublin, *via* Paris, at that time. This was probably a temporary interruption of his Italian stay, caused by his father's illness (see Swift's letter of 20th October, 1713, to Archdeacon Walls). If he brought back the score of the Scarlatti opera from Italy, Roseingrave must have returned there for it, since it was first produced in 1714.

spreading knowledge of his admired friend's work is found in the following advertisement from *The Daily Courant* of 25th March, 1718:

For the Benefit of Mademoiselle Coraill.

At Mr. Hickford's great Room in James-street near the Hay-market, Tomorrow, being Wednesday, the 26th of March, will be perform'd A Consort of the best Vocal and Instrumental Musick: In which Mademoiselle Coraill will sing several New Songs compos'd by the famous Domenico Scarlatti, never perform'd before in this Kingdom: With an Additional Italian Cantata with Instruments, compos'd by Mr. Thos. Roseingrave. To begin at 7 a Clock. Tickets are to be had at Slaughter's Coffee-room in St. Martin's Lane or at the Place of Performance, at 5s. each.

Roseingrave's known enthusiasm itself suffices to explain the performance of *Narciso* in 1720, and the fact that he was responsible for producing it and actually composed additional *arias* for it suggests that Domenico was not here to do these things for himself. As for the supposed visit to Dublin in 1741, the only supporting evidence produced by Grattan Flood is Burney's attribution to Domenico of two *arias* in a *pasticcio* opera *Alessandro in Persia*, produced in London on 31st October, 1741, and one *aria* in *Merope*, a version of Pergolesi's *L'Olimpiade*, produced in London on 20th April, 1742. It is ludicrous to suppose that all the composers of *arias* used in *pasticcio* operas must have been on the spot at the time. But Grattan Flood's theory, already badly battered, receives its death-blow when it can be shown that none of these *arias* were, in fact, by Domenico Scarlatti at all!

Burney remarks that the style of "Sparge al mare", one of the *arias* in *Alessandro in Persia*, "is too modern for any other opera that I can find, by Domenico Scarlatti" and he conjectures that it may have formed part of *Merope*, produced in Rome in 1740. Now this *Merope* is not by Domenico Scarlatti, but by his nephew, Giuseppe. Both "Sparge al mare" and the other *aria* used in *Alessandro in Persia*, "Passagier che fa ritorno", are from the Roman *Merope* of 1740, in which they were sung by Monticelli, who introduced them into *Alessandro in Persia* in London in the following year. And "Immagini dolenti", the Scarlatti¹⁷ *aria* in the London *Merope* of 1742, comes from Giuseppe's *Arminio in Germania*, produced at Florence in 1741, when it was sung by Amorevole, who brought it with him to London.¹⁸

So there is little reason to suppose that Domenico Scarlatti was in London in 1720 and none at all to suppose that he was here in 1741-42. But S. A. Luciani and others have been overhasty in presuming that he *never* came here. Baini's footnote in his biography of Palestrina, giving the list of masters of the Cappella Giulia, cannot be ignored. It includes: "1 Gen. 1715 Domenico Scarlatti, scolaro in Roma del Gasparini", with the remark: "Parti per Londra in Agosto del 1719". Unless we suppose Baini responsible for a reading, copying or printing error—"Londra" for "Lisbona"—I think we must accept this. After all, there *was* the Roseingrave connection and Domenico's uncle

¹⁷ In Walsh's "Favourite Songs" series, which was probably Burney's source, these *arias* are attributed to "Scarlatti", without Christian name.

¹⁸ The *arias* and singers in Giuseppe Scarlatti's *Merope* and *Arminio in Germania* have been confirmed for me from the *libretti* by Professor Napoleone Fanti, of the Liceo Musicale, Bologna, to whom my thanks are due.

Francesco had, without any doubt whatever, settled down in London, presumably also at Roseingrave's suggestion, only a few months before. A brief exploratory visit by Domenico, without public appearance or publicity, is surely possible?

Ralph Kirkpatrick informs me that Baini's source seems to have been the manuscript diary of Francesco Colignani, which under the date 3rd Sept., 1719, has this entry: "Per essere partito per l'Inghilterra il Sig. Scarlatti Maestro di S. Pietro, fu fatto Maestro il Sig. Ottavio Pitoni, che era a S. Giovanni in Laterano".

And now for Francesco. Appointed violinist of the Royal Chapel, Naples, in 1684, at the same time that Alessandro, through the influence of his naughty sister, became *maestro di cappella*, he married in 1690 and in Feb., 1691, obtained permission to return to Sicily. There he remained, as *maestro di cappella* to some unidentified institution (not the Royal Chapel) for a quarter of a century. Doubts about this long residence at Palermo have been completely dissipated by Tiby's discovery of documents concerning his family and the death (in 1706) of his wife. In 1715 Francesco appears in Vienna, having, according to Fux' report and recommendation, lost his position at Palermo owing to his Austrian sympathies. The following letter,¹⁹ which seems to have been overlooked, supplements the material in Köchel's biography of Fux:

(29 June, 1715, after the death a few months earlier of Marc' Antonio Ziani in Vienna.)

Holy, Caesarian and Royal Catholic Majesty!

The Maestro di Cappella of your Caesarian and Catholic Majesty having passed on to another life, if your Maestro di Cappella Fux should succeed to that post, I should venture (in that case) humbly to petition for a most clement glance towards my person, who for twenty-six years have held the position of Maestro di Cappella at Palermo, with the universal approbation of all virtuosi and composers of music.

If you should consider me worthy of so much honour, as would be (in the above-mentioned case) that of being deemed capable of succeeding to the post of the same Maestro di Cappella, I should hold it the utmost glory were my poor notes put to the test, in Church as in the Theatre and in your Majesty's Chamber, the which I would willingly submit to the judgment of anyone skilled in the Art, and I would undertake to make known the insufficiency of my talent; meanwhile, hoping for such most clement favour, prostrate before your Royal and Imperial Throne I consecrate myself for ever,

your Holy, Caesarian and Royal Catholic Majesty's most humble and most reverent servant and subject,

Francesco Scarlatti.

Apparently he succeeded only too well in making known the insufficiency of his talent, for he did not get the job. He seems to have returned to Naples and the service of the Royal Chapel. He certainly drew his stipend there in February, 1719.²⁰ And then, a little later, we find him in London.

I have looked through eleven years of the Burney collection of newspapers in search of references to the Scarlattis in England. I have found nothing

¹⁹ La Mara, "Briefe alter Wiener Hofmusiker", in *Musikbuch aus Österreich*, VII Jahrgang, 1910.

²⁰ From a note in the Scarlatti files of Professor Dent, which he has very kindly allowed me to examine.

that has not been mentioned before, either in Chrysander's *G. F. Händel* or in the article on Hickford's Room in *Grove*. But it is worth while putting all the references together and in chronological order.

(*Daily Courant*, 1st May, 1719.)

For the Benefit of Signor Francisco Scarlatti.

At Mr. Hickford's Great Room in James-street near the Hay-market, this present Friday, being the 1st of May, will be performed a Consort of Vocal and Instrumental Musick. The greatest Part of his own Composition, being Brother to the famous Alessandro Scarlatti. Tickets may be had at the Door. To begin at Seven a-Clock.

(*Ibid.*, 1st September, 1720.)

For the Benefit of Signor Francisco Scarlatti, Brother to the famous Alessandro Scarlatti.

At Mr. Hickford's Great Room in James-street, near the Hay-market, this present Thursday being the 1st of Sept., will be perform'd, A Consort of Vocal and Instrumental Musick, by the best Masters. The greatest Part of his own Composition. To begin at Seven a-Clock. Tickets may be had at Mr. Hickford's Great Room.

(*Ibid.*, 22nd March, 1721.)

At the King's Theatre in the Hay-market, on Tuesday next, being the 28th of March, will be perform'd A Serenata. Compos'd by Sig. Cavalliero Allessandro Scarlatti, perform'd by Sig. Francisco Bernardi Senesino, Signora Durastanti, Mrs. Anastasia Robinson, Signora Salvai, Sig. Boschi. No Persons will be admitted without Tickets, which will be deliver'd on Monday and Tuesday next, at Mrs. White's Chocolate House in St-James'-street, and at the Theatre, at half a Guinea each. Gallery 5s. The Stage will be illuminated, and put in the same Form as it was in the Balls.

(Similar advertisements on 27th and 28th March.)

(*Ibid.*, 14th March, 1724.)

This is to give Notice, that the Consort of Musick at Mr. Hickford's Great Room in James-street, near the Hay-market, for the Benefit of Signor Scarlatti, which was to be perform'd on Monday next, the 16th Instant, is put off till Friday following, the 20th. There will be perform'd a Pastoral Cantata for two Voices, accompanied with all Sorts of Instruments, composed by himself on that Occasion. To begin at Seven a-Clock. The Tickets given out for Monday will be taken on Friday. Tickets may be had at the Place of Performance, at 5s. each.

(Another advertisement, similarly worded, on 20th March.)

The *Grove* article on Hickford's Room is by Mrs. Robert Harrison, with additions by Grattan Flood. It was the former who first decided that the Scarlatti mentioned in the last advertisement, from 1724, was "most likely Domenico". This conclusion surely flies in the face of all probability. It seems more reasonable to suppose that Francesco Scarlatti was still in London in 1724. We do not know how he earned his living here, apart from the occasional benefit concerts listed above. One further trace of his activity is found in a letter from James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, to Dr. Arbuthnot, dated 21st January, 1720:

"In my Ire of yesterday I forgot to desire you wou'd send Scarlatti's Brother down whom you recommended to me and let me know wt Terms he will cōme to me upon."²¹

²¹ For a copy of this letter, from the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, I am indebted to Mr. C. H. Collins Baker. In his *The Life and Circumstances of James Brydges, First Duke of Chandos* (1949) Mr. Collins Baker gives details of musicians employed in the Cannons Concert.

As he does not appear on the list of musicians employed in the Cannons Concert it seems that Francesco Scarlatti did not take up this engagement. He may have been employed in some capacity at the Opera.

Among musicians active at the same period and performing frequently during these years at Hickford's Room was the violinist Matthew Dubourg. Dubourg was later appointed Master of the State Music in Ireland and lived at Dublin from September, 1728. He performed at the benefit concert for the dubious "Signior Scarlotti" at "Mr. Johnson's Great Room", Dublin, on 13th February, 1741. It seems at least possible that Francesco Scarlatti may have gone to Ireland with Dubourg. It is certainly more likely that the Dublin concert was given for his benefit, than for that of his nephew Domenico, who had been by that time employed for many years at the Spanish Court.

IX

Domenico's Portuguese Appointment

Research in Portuguese archives seems always to be brought to a stop by the earthquake of 1755 and it is likely that the documentary evidence of Domenico Scarlatti's appointment at Lisbon was destroyed in that catastrophe. At any rate nothing very decisive has ever been produced by his biographers. 1720 or 1721 is usually given for the date of his appointment. Ernesto Vieira, in his *Diccionario biographico de Musicos Portuguezes* (Lisbon 1900) says Domenico was first master of the Royal Chapel from 1721, with the obligation of teaching the ten-year-old Infanta Maria Barbara. This is as in *Fétis* and elsewhere. For details of the Royal Chapel Vieira refers us to the *Mappa de Portugal* of João Baptista de Castro, of which the second edition was published in 1762, but this work, although it records the expansion of the Royal Chapel's resources under João V, does not mention any musicians by name.

An initial point of contact between Domenico Scarlatti and the Portuguese Court is found in the *Applauso geneltiaco alla Reale Altezza del Signor Infante di Portogallo*, performed at the palace of the Marchese di Fontes, Portuguese Ambassador Extraordinary to the Pope, in 1714. In the *libretto* Domenico is described as *maestro di cappella* to this gentleman. Then from January, 1715, until August, 1719, he was master of the Cappella Giulia, in the Vatican, after which, as suggested above, it is likely enough that he paid a short visit to London, before passing, at some not precisely determined date, into the service of the Portuguese Court. We know that Domenico was back in Italy in 1724 and 25, on the evidence of Quantz and Hasse. Both witnesses mention the Portuguese appointment as something already existing at the time of their meetings with Domenico in Italy. Quantz, writing in 1754, says he arrived in Rome on 11th July, 1724, passing on to Naples on 13th January, 1725; between those dates he heard Domenico play in Rome:

"Mimo Scarlatti, son of the old Neapolitan Alessandro Scarlatti, a *galante* harpsichord-player after the style of that time, who was in Portuguese service, but later passed to the Spanish, where he still remains, was at that time also in Rome".²²

²² "Herrn Johann Joachim Quantzens Lebenslauf, von ihm selbst entworfen", in F. W. Marburg, *Historisch-Kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik*, I. Band, Berlin, 1754.

Hasse, who was a pupil of Alessandro's at Naples, 1722-5, told Burney that he heard Domenico play at Naples during that time:

"I [Burney] asked him, if he had ever heard Domenico Scarlatti play? He said that he had: as he came from Portugal to Naples, on a visit to his father, while he studied under him".²³

Quantz also says, curiously enough, that Alessandro Scarlatti in Naples, after introducing him to Neapolitan society, "in the end wanted to get me into Portuguese service, with a respectable salary". Had Domenico decided at this time not to return to Lisbon, and was Alessandro trying to find a substitute for him? I raise this point in view of the following passage in the Scarlatti article in the *Musicalisches Lexicon* of Johann Gottfried Walther (Leipsic 1732), which seems to have been completely overlooked in modern times, although it was clearly drawn upon by Hawkins:

"The King of Portugal took this celebrated Roman Chapelmaster into his service in 1728 and had paid out to him for his travelling expenses 2000 Thaler. See the *Hällische Zeitungen* No. CXXII."

Unfortunately the Halle newspaper to which reference is made is not available in this country and it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to trace in German libraries today, but this entry of Walther's is certainly of great interest in view of the obscurity of Domenico's life in these years and the lack of all documents from Portuguese sources, *until precisely this year 1728*, when we have the only Portuguese Scarlatti libretto known—the *Festeggio armonico*, performed in the Royal Palace at Lisbon on 11th January, 1728, in celebration of the engagement of the Infanta Maria Barbara to the Prince of Asturias. The details given (date and figure for travelling expenses) would seem to indicate that somebody in Halle was well-informed about this move and the importance of Walther's evidence is increased by the discovery of this entry under "Portugal":

"Catalogue of the Chapelmaster and leading instrumentalists in the Royal Portuguese Chapel at Lisbon in 1728.

Scarlatti, Chapelmaster, a Roman.

Joseph Antoni, Vice-Chapelmaster, a Portuguese.

Pietro Giorgio Avondano, first violinist, a Genoese.

Antonio Baghetti, first violinist, a Roman.

Alessandro Baghetti, second violinist, a Roman.

Johann Peter, second violinist, a Portuguese, but of German parents.

Thomas, third violinist, a Florentine.

Latur, fourth violinist and second oboist, a Frenchman.

Veith, fourth violinist and first oboist, a Bohemian.

Ventur, violist, a Catalanian.

Antoni, violist, a Catalanian.

Ludewig, bassoonist, a Bohemian.

Juan, violoncellist, a Catalanian.

Laurenti, violoncellist, a Florentine.

Paolo, contra-violinist, a Roman.

Antonio Joseph, organist, a Portuguese.

Floriani, discantist, a castrato and Roman.

Mossi, tenor, a Roman.

²³ *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and United Provinces*, London, 1773.

There are said to be as many instrumentalists again in this Chapel and the number of the singers reaches 30 or 40 persons, the majority Italians."

This pre-earthquake, contemporary account of the establishment of the Portuguese Royal Chapel seems well worth rescuing from oblivion.

The problem of Domenico's Portuguese appointment is complicated, and at the same time made more interesting, by a discovery of Ralph Kirkpatrick's:²⁴ Domenico Scarlatti got married in Rome on 15th May, 1728—that is, well after the date of the *Festeggio armonico* performance at Lisbon. Mr. Kirkpatrick believes that the notice about travelling expenses quoted by Walther applies to Domenico's journey from Madrid to Rome and back for his wedding. If we suppose, as is reasonable, that the Halle newspaper was a daily, published six days a week, then No. 122, to which reference is made, must indeed have appeared about a week after Domenico's marriage. But was Domenico necessarily present at Lisbon for the performance of his *Festeggio armonico*? Could it not have been commissioned from him in Italy? Did he decide, after living for some years at Lisbon, to marry a girl he had known at an earlier period in Rome? Or did he marry a girl he had been courting in Rome for some time before embarking for Lisbon after his appointment, or re-appointment, in 1728?

It may yet be found that Domenico Scarlatti had some engagement in Italy between 1725 and 1728.

X

New and forgotten information from Burney

In *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* Burney describes his visits to Farinelli at Bologna in 1770. The modesty of the great singer was such that he was unwilling to supply details of his own career. "However", says Burney, "he furnished me with all the particulars concerning Domenico Scarlatti, which I desired, and dictated to me very obligingly, while I entered them in my pocket-book". Unfortunately, Burney did not use this material, either in his accounts of his travels, or in *The History of Music*. The manuscript of the French and Italian tour (B.M. Add. 35122) contains at this point nothing omitted in the published version. The "pocket-book" would seem to have been lost.

A little information about Domenico Scarlatti's life in Spain is given in Giovenale Sacchi's biography of Farinelli²⁵ (1784):

"He not only helped his friends during their lifetimes, but also their families after their deaths. He did this with the painter Amigoni and with Domenico Scarlatti, the first of whom did not live long enough for the fortune of his dependents and the second by gambling had miserably dissipated the fruits of his ability and the gifts of royal munificence."

Dr. Scholes has drawn attention to the long series of articles contributed by Burney to Abraham Rees' *The Cyclopoedia or Universal Dictionary of*

²⁴ Mr. Kirkpatrick has very kindly discussed various difficult points with me, and provided information which will be fully documented in his forthcoming monograph.

²⁵ "Vita del cavaliere Don Carlo Broschi" in *Raccolta Ferrarese di opuscoli scientifici e letterari*, Tomo Decimoquinto, Venice, 1784.

Arts, Sciences and Literature. The article on Domenico Scarlatti, although mostly taken from his earlier writings, does contain a little additional information, drawn, without doubt, from the lost "pocket-book":

"Farinelli informed us, that Domenico Scarlatti, an agreeable man in society, was so much addicted to play, that he was frequently ruined, and as frequently relieved in his distresses by his royal patroness, the queen of Spain, who was constant in her admiration of his original genius and incomparable talents. He died in 1758 at 76th, in very bad circumstances, leaving a wife and two daughters totally unprovided of a subsistence; but the queen extended her liberality to the family of her old master, and settled a pension upon them, nearly equal to Scarlatti's own court appointment."

It is pleasing to know of Maria Barbara's kindness and generosity. The article on Alessandro Scarlatti in Rees's *Cyclopoedia* includes this:

"One of his sons, whom we found out at Rome, but in great indigence, observing that we were very curious concerning his father and brother Domenico, gave us the patent of his father's knighthood."

There is no mention at all, in either the published or the manuscript version of Burney's Italian travels, of this discovery of one of Alessandro's sons in Rome in 1770. Which of them was it? The youngest would have been 75 years of age at that time.

What happened to Alessandro's patent of knighthood?

A passage in the manuscript Italian travels provides a little more information on Alessandro's children. In the published version we read, of Cotumacci: "He was scholar to the Cavaliere Scarlatti, in the year 1719; and showed me the lessons he received from that great master, in his own hand writing. He also gave me a very particular account of Scarlatti and his family". Here is the corresponding passage in the MS:

(Sunday, 4th November, 1770.)

"Went this morning to St. Gennaro to hear the organ and to see the Chapel and pictures in it by Domenichino—afterwards to the house of D. Carlo Cotumacci, whom I heard play and talk a great deal about old times. He was scholar to the Cav. Scarlatti in the year 1719 and showed me his Lessons, in Scarlatti's own handwriting. He had four sons—Pietro, good for nothing; Domenico, *famosissimo*; Nicolo, *Abate*; Carlo, *pittore*; two daughters—one that died young, and one who died just before her Father. Her name was Flaminia."

Cotumacci's remark about Pietro, "good for nothing", confirms the impression left by what we know of his career and his one opera. The children not mentioned at all by Cotumacci may have died young, or may have left Naples before 1719. Burney has here preserved the only known information about the careers of Giuseppe Nicola and Carlo Francesco, and about the death of Flaminia.

XI

Giuseppe Scarlatti

"Mystère! Heureux qui pourra résoudre cette autre énigme."—PASQUALE FIENGA.

Giuseppe Scarlatti was the last distinguished member of the family. Very well known in his day as an opera-composer, first in Italy and then in Austria

²⁴ Actually, in 1757 at nearly 72.

and Germany, his degree of relationship to Alessandro and Domenico has been much discussed and disputed. The exact date of his birth is still in doubt and nobody knows who were his parents. There is almost no material for even the outline of a biographical sketch: all we have are the dates and places of performance of his numerous operas, furnished by the *libretti*; it is probable that he himself directed the first performances of them and possibly also some of the later revivals.

Carlo Schmidl seems to have been responsible for the discovery, or at least the publication, of the entry regarding Giuseppe Scarlatti's death in Vienna, on 17th August, 1777, according to which entry he was 65, and thus, it was calculated, born in 1712. He left an orphan child of three, his wife having died of consumption before him, at the age of only twenty-six. Then Prota-Giurleo, in 1926, produced details of one Giuseppe Scarlatti, born at Naples on 18th June, 1723, the son of Tommaso, Alessandro's youngest brother. This Giuseppe had a sister named Rosa, born in 1716, who was identified by Prota-Giurleo with a contemporary opera-singer of repute; brother and sister, we were told, were both at Venice in 1747, and Rosa was well known as a singer in Austria and Germany, whither she was followed by Giuseppe. After this, 1723 was generally accepted as Giuseppe's year of birth, only Schmidl still insisting on 1712.

Fienga, in his inconclusive article in the *Revue Musicale* for February, 1932, referred to the *libretto* of *La SSma Vergine Annunziata*, a *Componimento Sacro* performed in Rome in 1739,²⁷ in the dedication of which the composer alludes to the protection that the Scarlatti family, in the person of his uncle, had long enjoyed at the court of the "gran Monarca cattolico". Fienga took this to be a reference to Alessandro, fourteen years after his death. Luciani, in the Siena booklet of 1940, supplied the obvious correction. The reference is clearly to *Domenico* and his service with the King of Spain. And if *Domenico* was the *uncle* of the composer Giuseppe Scarlatti, then the latter cannot be identified with the son of Tommaso of the same name, for in that case he would have been *Domenico's cousin*. I would add to this that Rosa Scarlatti, daughter of Tommaso, was *also* wrongly identified with the opera-singer of the same name, for the latter was a Florentine (the cast of Vinci's *Demofonte*, as performed at Lucca in 1741 includes "Rosa Scarlatti di Firenze").²⁸

1723 is no longer tenable as the date of birth of Giuseppe Scarlatti the opera composer. But 1712, derived from the entry regarding his death in Vienna, is also unlikely to be correct. I have pointed out above that estimates of age in registers of deaths are almost always wrong, and in this case the composer died far from home and all his adult relatives. The argument employed above in the case of Vinci applies also to Giuseppe Scarlatti. After *La SSma Vergine Annunziata*, his first opera was *Merope*, performed in Rome, Teatro Capranica, in the carnival season of 1740. From that time forward he produced a steady stream of new works, for more than thirty years. If he

²⁷ If the misprinted date "MDCCXXXVIX" is correctly interpreted.

²⁸ Almachilde Pellegrini, "Spettacoli Lucchesi nei secoli XVII-XIX", in *Memorie e Documenti per servire alla Storia di Lucca*, Tomo XIV, Lucca, 1914.

were born in 1712 he would have begun his real career as a composer at the age of 28, which is very late. If we take it that his first opera was produced at the age of about twenty or twenty-one, then he was born c. 1718. 1718 is the date given for Giuseppe's birth by reference books prior to Schmidl. It seems to me that we should return to it, until the true birth certificate, or equivalent document, is discovered. Gerber, a younger contemporary of Giuseppe's, gives 1718 for his birth, and Burney, in an article in Rees' *Cyclopaedia*, does the same.²⁹

A question still unanswered is: "Which of Domenico's brothers was the father of Giuseppe?"

One small contribution to Giuseppe Scarlatti's biography remains to be made. The wife who died of consumption in Vienna, aged twenty-six, was his *second* consort. He had been previously married to the Florentine singer, Barbara Stabili. The wedding took place at Lucca in the autumn of 1747. A contemporary chronicler, Giovanni Domenico Baldotti, quoted by Pellegrini, refers to Giuseppe's *Artaserse* and adds: "After this opera Scarlatti left Lucca, taking with him as his wife Barbara Stabili, singer". For some years the name of Barbara Stabili-Scarlatti continues to appear in the *libretti* of operas by her husband and others. During the carnival season of 1748 she was singing at Milan, in Galuppi's *L'Olimpiade*; in 1749 in Lampugnani's *Andromaca* at Turin; in the carnival season of 1750 in Giuseppe Scarlatti's *Siroe* at Turin and in the autumn of the same year in Abos' *Alessandro nell'Indie* at Lucca. The last appearance I have been able to trace was in Giuseppe's own setting of *Alessandro nell'Indie* at Reggio Emilia in 1753.

²⁹ Burney's article on Giuseppe Scarlatti, like some of the others, is taken almost word for word from Gerber. Dr. Scholes does not mention this fact.

La Forza del Destino

BY

VINCENT GODEFROY

A Voice within: This way! This way! How horrible!

[*Don Alvaro comes to his senses and immediately rushes towards the cliff. The Father Superior enters with the monks, who pause in astonishment.*]

Father Superior: My God! Bloodshed! Corpses! The penitent woman!

All the Monks: A woman! Heavens!

Father Superior: Father Rafael!

Don Alvaro (speaking from a crag, with a devilish smile and trembling all over): You can search for Father Rafael, you fool! I am a messenger from Hell! I am the spirit of destruction! Away, you wretches!

All: Jesus! Jesus!

Don Alvaro: Hell, open your throat and swallow me up! Let the Heavens collapse! Let the race of Man perish! Extermination! Annihilation!

[*He climbs to the summit of the rock and throws himself down.*]

Father Superior and the Monks (in various attitudes of terror): Have pity, merciful God, have pity!

AND so, in Madrid on the night of 22nd March, 1835, fell the curtain of the Teatro del Príncipe amid one of those enthusiastic tumults that were everywhere heralding the emancipation of the drama. Through five long *jornadas* the audience had witnessed the predestined fate of Don Alvaro unfolding in a series of relentless blows so illogical that his final rebellion against the Almighty must have seemed the only reasonable solution for a soul so irrationally tortured. The author, Don Ángel de Saavedra, who inherited the Dukedom of Rivas in the year before his play was produced, had wandered in exile as a proscribed liberal, and in Malta had made a close friend of John Hookham Frere, who introduced him to English poetry, particularly that of his contemporaries Scott and Byron. This experience so coloured his muse and inspired his flair for narrative verse that he emerged at the forefront of Spanish Romanticism. The ballad metres and lyrical measures of his native poetry were a natural medium for the rich mixture of chivalry and adventure that stirred the impressionable heart of Saavedra. His play *Don Alvaro o La Fuerza del Sino* is an anthology of his enthusiasms, exuberantly poured into a series of dramatic settings.

The story concerns the fate of Don Alvaro, an *indiano*, the son of a deposed and imprisoned Inca viceroy of Peru. He has found his way to Seville and has become a popular and successful toreador. But he has enraged the Marquis of Calatrava by capturing the heart of his daughter Doña Leonor. An abduction is arranged, but the plans miscarry and the Marquis himself intervenes, only to be shot accidentally by Alvaro as he throws down his pistol in a gesture of disarmament. In the subsequent confusion the lovers are separated and pursue their several ways, each supposing that they will never meet again. On their tracks are the two sons of the Marquis; Don Carlos, a

soldier, and Don Alfonso, a university student. The former follows his sister, but loses her as she claims the sanctuary of the Church and goes to earth in a disused hermit's cell: the latter chases Álvaro and embarks for South America on a false trail, while his quarry joins the Spanish Army and is drafted to Italy to take part in what the history books call the War of the Austrian Succession. But Don Carlos, foiled by the disappearance of Leonor, returns to the Army and is posted to the same camp as Don Álvaro. They meet in mutual ignorance of each other's identity when Álvaro saves Carlos from imminent peril. But the resulting friendship is short-lived, for Don Carlos discovers the truth and challenges Álvaro to a duel, in which he is killed. Álvaro, arrested and condemned to death, takes the opportunity of an Austrian attack on the camp to seek a nobler death in the midst of battle. But he survives, and with the blood of two successive Marquises of Calatrava on his hands, he returns to Spain and enters a monastery, where in time he gains a reputation for saintliness. But Don Alfonso, back from America, tracks him down in his retreat, provokes him to yet another duel, and suffers the fate of his elder brother. Don Álvaro, desperate to save his soul from the blood of the third and last Marquis, calls for the assistance of a hermit who lives in an adjacent cell. The hermit is Doña Leonor. In the dismay of mutual recognition Alfonso stabs his sister as a dying gesture, and Álvaro is left to complete the story as quoted at the beginning.

This orgy of extravagant coincidences and concealed identities escapes being as absurd as it sounds because Saavedra has filled out his canvas with a shifting pattern of minor characters who never group themselves into a tiresome underplot, but dilute the strength of the melodrama and yet at appropriate moments contribute a further concentration of theatrical effect. The play contains fifteen scenes, in the course of which we meet twenty-six individuals together with throngs of villagers, muleteers, monks and soldiers. Rivas, painter as well as poet, had an eye for all levels and a knowledge of perspective not always found in drama. The *El Trovador* of Gutiérrez, parent of Verdi's most famous opera but offspring of *Don Alvaro*, lacks this picturesque fullness and so cannot screen its absurdities.

But the central theme of *Don Alvaro* is stated in its sub-title *La Fuerza del Sino*. Rivas was fascinated by the lure of that most primitive of dramas, the futile struggle of Man against divine predestination. His picture, however, is not the noble one of a classical nemesis and heroic atonement; nor is it in accord with Shakespeare's more forthright "blood will have blood". The characters of Rivas are as flies to the wanton gods; for in this play literally everything goes wrong. There is no suffering of a tragic mind; no inner conflict of a tormented conscience; no choice of paths with the wrong one taken. Each person acts with justification, yet all are unlucky in the results of their actions. Somewhere beyond them lurks a terrible power, relentlessly committed to their destruction. Even the sanctuary of Holy Church, so humanly depicted in the play, has no protective value against this frightful fiend that treads close behind. The superstitious, star-gazing Peruvian Inca with the mysterious past and glamorous memories is perhaps a fit subject for such a

tale of destiny; but the proud Catholic aristocracy of civilized Spain is equally compelled to bow before such senseless blows of fate that we cannot class the play as tragedy for all its catastrophic unfolding. The fault, dear Rivas, is not in our stars, but in ourselves. . . .

Clearly *Don Alvaro* could not long escape the tentacles of the opera world, which were for ever probing about among contemporary romantic dramas to snatch the juiciest prey. And how juicy *Don Alvaro* must have seemed! It contained a forbidden love-affair, a father's curse, a vendetta, friendship turned to hatred, sword-fights and sudden death, a praying heroine, a battle, a *miserere* . . . almost a nineteenth-century opera composer's paradise. There was no deep or complex political background away from which the characters would have to be forcibly torn, to the detriment of the resulting *précis*. All that would be necessary for a librettist was the excision of the scenes of peasant gossip and barrack-room speculation, and a fusion of the episodes of conflict between pursuers and pursued.

If this in fact represents the original view of Piave, entrusted with his tenth (and last) Verdi *libretto*, he must soon have realized two things: first that the remaining drama of the principals was too short, and secondly that it was unevenly distributed between several men and only one woman, and she an absentee from the major portion of the proceedings. Piave was therefore faced with a problem perhaps unusual for a librettist—that of enlarging, instead of reducing, the part of a protagonist. He achieved this with a skill which should not surprise students of his *libretti*, who, it is to be hoped, will rate his craftsmanship more highly than those to whom a *libretto* must of its very nature be a mere travesty. Piave magnified Doña Leonor by the simple method of cutting down the opposition. He made one brother out of Saavedra's two. But as this was only a negative way out of the difficulty, he brought the soprano out of hiding in the tavern-kitchen scene, thus giving her an additional appearance of which Verdi made excellent use in his score. Yet if this did result in a more balanced distribution, it still left a predominantly masculine drama, particularly throughout the long period between Doña Leonor's induction and her final reappearance. So Piave borrowed Saavedra's gipsy Preziosilla from the first scene of the play and put her in the tavern-kitchen and again in the camp at Velletri, thus turning an original nonentity into a highly colourful forces' favourite.

The problem of "feminine interest" therefore led to two deviations from the play, one very successful and the other far less so. The tavern-kitchen scene, which is simply one of Saavedra's low-life interludes in which a motley gathering of friendly individuals jokingly speculates on the sex of a shy young traveller who will not join the party, becomes in the opera an active continuation of the drama's development. A lively student, who opens the scene by playing his guitar and singing while the peasants dance a seguidilla, who earns the respect of his simple companions by his wit and his excursions into Latin, and who finally confides that he has been helping his university friend Alfonso Vargas to search for the runaway Leonor, is revealed by Piave to be Vargas himself. So when the sister, lurking in the background (though she

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does not appear in the play), recognizes her brother posing as a student and apparently still closer on her trail than he realizes, we have an additional twist of irony that changes this scene from an interlude to a link; so that where Saavedra divided, the librettist has joined. For not only does the Leonora of the opera enjoy an extra appearance, but Preziosilla, earmarked for popularity in the camp scene, is here given a central opportunity of proving her entertainment value with a war-song that includes a playful tilt at the pseudo-student, and is incidentally preluded by some dialogue which contains the last fragment of *Risorgimento* pamphleteering to be found in Verdi's *libretti*. And though the student, *alias* Don Carlo di Vargas, behaves quite out of accord with his character as it will unfold in later scenes, he is a very faithful reproduction of Saavedra's student, even to his fondness for Latin tags. In fact, where Saavedra's student misquotes Virgil, Piave's Don Carlo gets him right—surely one of the very few instances of a librettist being more accurate than his model. Don Carlo, however, for all his gaiety genuine or assumed, does not accompany the opening dance on a guitar. That would have been too much for a vendetta-sworn Vargas.

The problem of lightening the long-drawn amity and enmity of Carlo and Alvaro in the third act was not so successfully handled. Saavedra's lesser characters, so lavishly introduced and cast aside, could not for economic reasons be incorporated; so the colourful revellers of the Hornachuelos tavern were brought into the camp, together with Brother Melitone, the janitor of the monastery. Preziosilla's mezzo-soprano merriment, being dramatically quite detached from the purposeful passions of Carlo and Alvaro, does not provide an acceptable foil; while Melitone, amusing and provoking the general company of soldiers and camp-followers with a comic sermon full of puns derived from (of all things!) Maffei's translation of the *Wallensteins Lager* of Schiller, is so artificially pitchforked into the proceedings that one wonders whether perhaps M. Jourdain has been at work. All these camp jollifications were a serious mistake, which subsequent re-arrangement failed to reduce. For not only do they spoil the dramatic course of the third act, but they immediately precede the soup-ladling scene with which the fourth act opens, and so weaken the intrinsic value of the latter, which was Saavedra's Shakespearean trick of placing a wisp of laughter across the threshold of doom. The last two acts of *La Forza del Destino* give the impression that as soon as Alvaro and Carlo turn their giant backs, all sorts of curious little creatures seize the occasion to emerge from their hiding places and pass an hour in frolic. Saavedra's play never makes one feel this. Such were the attendant uncertainties when Piave and Verdi had to work a woman's voice into an act of males. Wagner's *Siegfried* was still on the stocks.

The opera has gained its renown chiefly through its great soprano *arias* and the Alvaro-Carlo duets which in melody and construction lift the drama high and heroically to that plane of supermanhood designed by the poetry of Rivas. The main passions of the play are in turn given musical expression remarkably related in spirit to the lyrical utterances of the original characters, an inspired feature of so many of Verdi's operas which must be felt by anyone

familiar with the plays from which the *libretti* are taken. But whereas Rivas wrote his drama round the appalling destiny of Álvaro, Verdi by instinct placed Leonora in the centre of his own sympathy. Rivas was not principally concerned with his Doña Leonor, but quite apart from operatic necessity Verdi would naturally be much moved by her plight. So in addition to her inclusion in the tavern-kitchen she was given a fully developed *aria* in the final scene where Rivas had not thought it worth while to grant her even a short soliloquy. But to lengthen a rôle may not be to increase its dramatic importance; and if we are to look for the true measure of Verdi's feeling for Leonora, it is surely in the overture that we shall find it, where her predominant themes are paraded with some show of symphonic poetry.

This sturdy overture, which only fails to be in the first class of its kind if we make the error of measuring it by Wagnerian architectural standards, opens with three trumpet blasts that denote fate not so much knocking on the door as battering it down; and the three blows seem to suggest the three heavy afflictions of Leonora—the sudden death of her father, the loss of her lover, and the fatal enmity of her brother. They are followed by the pulsing motif of pursuing nemesis which dogs her footsteps throughout the opera more surely and with greater musical effect than any other such orchestral device in the long line of Verdi's operas; and in the course of the overture this insistent theme is repeated, varied, and inverted over seventy times, while the pinnacle of the structure is the sweeping curve of Leonora's prayer, to be followed by the flowing tune of her relief at being kindly received by the Father Superior. Two other themes from the opera, not directly associated with Leonora, are used in the overture, but without any structural logic. The overture is virtually all hers, until a savage (if conventional) coda puts a violent end to the parade of her emotions. This overture is Verdi's last, and incidentally the last of any consequence in the annals of Italian opera; a parting fling in honour of a vanishing fashion; a belated and not unworthy (dare it be said?) *Leonora No. 4*.

Throughout the opera Leonora's music is strongly expressive of her moods. It is least revealing in the first scene, for before the catastrophe of the pistol has occurred she is an ordinary enough heroine; but at the back of the tavern and before the monastery gates she is translated, as Rivas did not manage it nor could have done, by the setting of her solo voice against prayer-choruses which coldly emphasize her essential loneliness. This is especially moving in the finale to the monastery scene—a scene through which the soprano voice floats unsupported in an ascetic world of men—where her prayer to the Virgin, though it seems to lead the *ensemble*, is still the cry of an outcast. As much as two hours can elapse in the theatre before she appears again; and then she bursts from her solitary confinement, her voice rising out of her nemesis-motif in a long-drawn *pace* that can be electrifying in the way in which it brings back with a rush the personality of one whose misery the long interval may have taken from our minds. Here Leonora is given one of those grandly constructed *arias* which Verdi's mind was just then developing, *arias* which are no longer set pieces, but a sort of melodic declamation; and the difference between the music of this passage and the prayers of the monastery scene is the difference

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between the fervent heart of a suppliant and the frayed mentality of a time-worn recluse.

With Leonora so powerfully portrayed, even though so long absent, Alvaro, the protagonist of Rivas, must take a secondary place. There is in the play a significant opening scene depicting the old Moorish bridge over the Guadalquivir at Seville, at the climax of which Don Álvaro slowly and silently crosses the stage, booted and spurred, with silken cloak and white sombrero, a dignified and melancholy figure. His passing is a symbol of that romantic mystery which clings to him throughout the drama. The total omission of this scene robs the operatic Alvaro of a colourful establishment of character, for which Verdi had to make a purely musical provision. This he contrived by linking him with a phrase which carries simply enough a poetic nostalgia for his distant origin, and by making him break out into pathetically lovely phrases under the stress of emotion. The phrase that may be called his motif he sings gallantly in the love duet, and it recurs several times in the camp scene, wistfully reflective on the wood-wind, after which it is not heard again. Apart from this usually orchestral phrase Alvaro is given sudden lines of lyrical beauty, as in the recitative to his *aria* at the beginning of Act III, the "*Or muoio tranquillo*" of the friendship duet, the "*No, d'un imene vincolo*" of the quarrel, the "*Sulla terra l'ho adorata*" of the second challenge, and the "*Leonora, io son redento*" in the final trio. This capacity for rising to a special type of phrase is shared by Manrico in *Il Trovatore* and seems, as in this earlier instance, to reflect the cadences of the Spanish dramatic poetry. Certainly it depicts Alvaro's romantic nature in a way that compensates in some degree for the loss of Rivas' fuller painting of his character.

Don Carlo di Vargas is strongly contrasted with Don Alvaro by means of a brooding solemnity that darkly opposes the latter's mellifluous dreams. He is as unbudgingly earnest in his friendship as in his subsequent hate, and his music is clothed in a conventional and unadventurous pattern that seems to hit off exactly a none too imaginative character. His *aria* "*Urna fatale del mio destino*" faithfully expresses his vacillating mind, as he smugly reiterates in archaic patterning the final couplet of the stanza:

"Disperso vada il mal pensiero,
Disperso vada il mal pensiero, il mal pensiero
Che all'atto indegno mi concito.
Disperso vada il mal pensiero,
Disperso vada il mal pensiero, il mal pensiero
Che all'atto indegno mi concito.
Disperso vada il mal pensiero
Che all'atto indegno mi concito,
Mi concito, mi concito."

Such tiresome repetition dies out of the later Verdian opera, but here for once the convention is wholly in character and fails to sound out of fashion, as it illustrates in a singular manner the waverings of a weak conscience. The subsequent cabaletta too, which rings with dynamic jubilation hot on the surgeon's news that Alvaro will live, is unashamedly cast in the antique mould, yet is a really justifiable cabaletta if ever there was one. Don Carlo's music is

that of a human Di Luna set against the music of a superhuman Manrico; and that is the measure of difference between the great-hearted hero who commands most of our sympathy and his narrow-minded foe who claims only a small portion of it. As usual Verdi has pulled off the dramatic contrast by the simple means of putting the right tune in the right place.

Of the remaining characters only the Father Superior achieves any dignity, for the unfortunate Marquis, finely depicted as he is, has all too short a date. In the Father Superior the poetry of Saavedra gave Verdi a ready-made bass rôle, and he seized upon it with his normal skill in the portrayal of senile grandeur. But it is significant that the Father Superior does not contribute to the long hierarchy of bass *arias* that form so rich a part of Verdi's genius. His voice is conceived as a solemn foil to the pleading soprano of Leonora and the skittish baritone of Brother Melitone. His music paints him not so much as a character in himself as an ideal towards which Leonora earnestly strives and against which Melitone impudently rebels. Even without one of the conventionally grand *arias* his stature attains the quintessence of nobility.

Of the lighter music, though it occupies a disproportionate amount of the score, little need be said. *Preziosilla* lives by rhythm rather than melody, a proletarian offspring of the page Oscar without the ingenuous charm. Trabuco the muleteer is more endearing with his broadly bucolic tunes. Melitone alone demands some examination, for he has been proclaimed the ancestor of Falstaff. Both are baritones, and both are corpulent (for what operatic monk is not?), but a whole world lies between Melitone and Falstaff—the world of *Don Carlo*, *Aida*, the *Requiem*, *Boccanegra* revised, and *Otello*; hardly a world in which comedy was being nursed. Melitone is not a limbering up for Falstaff, but a last and highly interesting flicker of the old *opera buffa* which had never been Verdi's preserve. His punning sermon is far more a carefree reflection of Macbeth's dagger soliloquy than a precursor of a Falstaffian monologue. It contains nothing that is not the lightest possible touch of a naturally heavy hand. The soup-ladling scene is Donizetti in Verdi's apron, a very thick *minestrone*. His duet with the Father Superior, though it certainly draws a musical distinction between the serious and the flippant mind, is about as conventionally plain as a duet could be, written for a serious bass and a comic baritone. Melitone is fun, to be sure; but if one regards *Falstaff* as a miracle, it is impossible to claim his graceless part as an adumbration of the *buon corpo d'ì Sir John*.

It is through its abundance of first-rate tunes that *La Forza del Destino* lives, for its tragedy is not exactly purgative. Its real merit lies perhaps in its long-drawn exploitation of the unexpected. Surely no other opera starts with so sonorous an overture only to die away after four rousing acts in a *pianissimo* string *tremolo*. This afterthought of Verdi's, appalled as he was at the horrible finale (not many degrees more bloody than some which had previously fascinated him), was a praiseworthy act of self-censorship. For in rescuing Alvaro from the fearful fate that Rivas provided, he not only saved his soul from the certain perdition which no amount of monastic *miserere* could have averted, but also gave us cause to find a drop of pity for a much-wronged hero for whom

no pity had been solicited. Between the robust overture and this delicate finale lies a galaxy of picturesque scenes, hilarious and pious, bitter and sentimental, frantic and reposeful, such as are seldom found in one operatic score. And yet to close it all the helmeted musician (as Rossini is said to have dubbed him), surfeited with the corpses of Hugo, Schiller, Shakespeare, Scribe and Gutiérrez, suddenly recoiled from those crashing chords that had become almost a mechanism for releasing the curtain, and nobly allowed his turbulent melodrama to dwindle away peacefully, all passion spent.

According to Damon *An Essay in Special Pleading*

BY

REGINALD NETTEL

"Such a thing [the admiration of a new method of song] is neither to be commended nor admitted: for to receive a new kind of music is to be guarded against as endangering the whole of the constitution; for never are the measures of music altered without the greatest politic laws, according to Damon, with whom I agree."—Plato: *The Republic*, Book 4.

BUT this is not British. We do not fear for our constitution at the hands of musicians, and as for Plato's earlier comment: "not to make any innovations in the exercise and music, contrary to the order of the state, but to maintain this order as much as possible"—a fig for Greek temerity. They lived two thousand years ago, a tiny island of culture in the midst of a sea of barbarity, but we, secure in a constitutional tradition that has grown up with our nation, are not afraid of change. Do we not go out of our way at least every five years to invite one? Change all this with a tune? What then? Change the tune, let us have something new. To be consistent, Britain ought to be the first country in the world to welcome new advances in music. Ought to be? So very moral and so very British. That we do not welcome new modes of composition, however, with the faith we put in new scientific doctrines is obvious, and when we do, we prefer to see the trademark "Made in Britain" on the goods: we do not welcome everything according to its quality.

This rejection of quality as a sole criterion surely lies at the root of much that is relevant to modern behaviour, for we are grown used to reports of advanced musicians who have left their native lands for the Damonic reason. The trouble is that so many states have acted in the same way from apparently different motives: Hitler made much of a racial theory while Stalin speaks of Marx, and never the twain, one would think, can meet; yet they did undoubtedly meet in their belief in the political value of music, whether it stems from Plato or not. What is the advanced composer to do if his work should bring him into opposition with the state? There are two courses of action open: the first is to comply with the state's requirements, the second to leave the state.

When, for example, Egon Wellesz found himself in Holland during the Anschluss of 1938, with reports coming through that the Nazis were taking a particular interest in the contents of his study in Vienna, he took the latter course; and because he had friends in England, which he knew to be a country famous in the past for giving sanctuary to the oppressed, he came to England. He was not altogether disappointed: within a month he had been found a place wherein he could continue his researches into Byzantine music: he found a welcome at Lincoln College, Oxford.

In 1932 the University of Oxford had honoured Wellesz, bestowing on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Music, and receiving as a token of his regard

the score of his cantata *Mitte des Lebens*, a work which is no mere academic exercise, but one that has found favour with continental audiences. He might hope, then, to continue his life's work in Oxford uninterrupted.

Others too sought sanctuary; some of the best brains in Germany found their way to the U.S.A. All too few came to England, or, if they came, remained. How was this? Hans Redlich saw his friend Wellesz in Oxford in 1939, but apparently found him most unhappy. "The creative mainspring of music seemed to have dried up [*sic!*] in Wellesz", he writes. "Was there any use in composing operas for non-existent opera houses? The language that had for so long inspired his innermost musical thought seemed worse than dead—polluted in its very elements. Where was the expectant crowd to be found at whose benefit music's 'community building power' (as Paul Bekker used to call it) could prove itself?" Not only were there no opera houses, but Wellesz' Cantata had had no performance anywhere in the British dominions. Was all the speechmaking of 1932 sincere, or was the decision to honour a modern Viennese composer no more than a fitting way to revive memories of Oxford's association with Haydn?

Strangely enough, the speeches were sincere. Wellesz is famous as scholar and composer; and it is only as a composer that he is neglected. He moved on rejoicing in 1932, but returned to stay in 1938. Though it might be to his advantage to move on again—this time to the U.S.A.—Wellesz has not done so, but has become a British subject. This is not another hard-luck story, but a study in artistic influences and motives which ought to have some bearing on Wellesz' music.

The first thing to note is that for six years after settling in England he wrote no music.

"We learn to swim in winter", say the psychologists, "and to skate in summer". The implication is that during periods of enforced inactivity the mind perfects the thought that will direct the faculties skilfully when the opportunity comes again. In the case of a purely mental activity like the composing of music the processes of meditation and expression are more easily related. However frustrating the sojourn of a musician or a mystic in the wilderness may appear to the unbeliever, it is a fact that his most effective prophecies come after such an experience. Egon Wellesz, an accepted authority on the continent and the creator of much-admired music, had every encouragement to continue in that way, but not until he settled in England was he forced to meditate for long unwanted in the wilderness. Then came results in 1943 with the appearance of Wellesz' fifth string Quartet,¹ followed the next year by his setting of Gerard Manley Hopkins' *The Leaden and the Golden Echo*² for soprano voice, violin, clarinet, cello and piano.³ In 1945 came Wellesz' first Symphony which can now be studied in detail, since it is available

¹ Schott & Co., 1948.

² Schott & Co., 1947.

³ Some consideration has already been given to these works by Dr. Redlich in an essay entitled "Egon Wellesz—An Austrian Composer in Britain", published in *THE MUSIC REVIEW*, vol. VII, no. 2, and by Wilfrid Mellers in his *Studies in Contemporary Music*.

in print.⁴ That I did not get to know more about Wellesz' music at an earlier date is to be put down to my gullibility. For, to my shame I must admit that the Symphony was my first introduction to his work, and that not until early in 1949.

There is in London a place where the elder statesmen of the musical world congregate to hear learned lectures: in conversation with one of these I asked how it was that we had so few opportunities of hearing any of the compositions of Wellesz. "Ah", said my friend, "it may be a pity, but I understand that his music is somewhat dry".

I did not question further, though perhaps I ought to have done so: one tends, however, to trust the judgment of elder statesmen. A year later I switched on the B.B.C. Third Programme out of curiosity. I was just in time to hear the beginning of Wellesz' first Symphony in a recorded version taken from a radio performance in Hamburg.* I remained to hear it through, despite the elder statesman, for the simple reason that it was not dry, but in parts actually lyrical. The ending of the first movement summed up the thought tersely and convincingly, in the second movement there was a good deal of clever counterpoint held in the grip of a five-note *moto perpetuo*, and as for the finale, few of us are likely to quarrel with a *molto adagio* ending these days. Why had I been told that Wellesz was "dry"?

Let us be fair: the score of the first Symphony had not been published when I received that opinion, nor had the work been heard. I recollected that Wellesz was a pupil of Schönberg, and, though certainly not the Prince of Evil, might well carry the devil's mark. Brought up myself among people who regarded Handel and Elgar with evangelistic fervour, I had come to suspect such hot enthusiasm, and though I never became, like Bishop Berkeley, "an enemy of all enthusiasts", I learned to counter their fanaticism with a suitable antidote—Bach and Brahms. For a time I was even convinced that Handel and Elgar were vulgar, but this I did not myself discover—I was taught. Like the subterranean prisoners in the seventh book of the *Republic*, who were so chained that they could not turn their heads, and were able to see objects behind them only as shadows cast on the wall before them, I had in my Handel-Elgar period seen music only in distortion until my abler teachers turned me round to face the true light. And in accordance with true Platonic doctrine they had not allowed me to see the full light of day at first, but had guided me gradually to it so that my mind could assimilate the beauty of Bach and Brahms without pain. Oh, wise and wily mentors! Had I been a Viennese no doubt I should have sworn in due course by a tradition extending at least from Haydn to Mahler, and never for a moment have doubted that I too could enter into that tradition. As it was, I had to be conditioned by Bach and Brahms, and one thing is quite clear to me—I cannot accept the music of Egon Wellesz in the spirit that animates his former Viennese colleague Redlich. Am I still watching shadows on a wall? Still seeing only what I have been

⁴ Schott & Co., 1949.

* See also THE MUSIC REVIEW, vol. X, p. 131 [Ed.].

preconditioned to see? Perhaps: but the fact that I have been conditioned twice already makes me suspicious. I have grave doubts that a fondness for Bach and Brahms is in any way more desirable than a fondness for Handel and Elgar, and the lot of them will not improve my taste for Wellesz.

I know it from my reaction to the fifth string Quartet of Wellesz. This was the first work he wrote after his passage through the wilderness of 1938 to 1943, and both Dr. Redlich and Wilfrid Mellers speak of it with admiration; yet I find its poignancy too intense. I agree, however, that the Quartet is no mere imitation of Schönberg, even where Wellesz uses the twelve-note system. The presence of the diatonic triads in the tone-row of the scherzo binds the thought to my preconditioned mind, and in the first and last movements the anchors of form and tonality are strong, though the melodic freedom of the note-patterns is far beyond anything previously achieved in the major and minor tonal systems. The ornate figuration in the middle portion of the last movement, *Lento* (of a sorrowful nature, and marked at the head of the movement "In Memoriam"), is by no means dry: indeed, some who put their faith in the abstract might even scout its wealth of expression; while the first movement, compact sonata-form, with a tearing unisonic first subject leading by way of a waning figure marked *sul tasto* to some varied *pizzicato* and *arco* chords and on to the bounding *allegro energico* of the second subject, is logical enough. It is not lack of understanding that bars me from full enjoyment, nor even admiration, but the feeling that the music is somehow unlovable: his treatment of the strings is so ruthless that I want to rush out to Hyde Park and make speeches in favour of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Fiddlers. I like the sixth and seventh quartets better.

Why is this? They are more playable and their texture is more open. There was economy in the fifth Quartet, but a compression of subject-matter too. In the sixth and seventh the lines are more open, as in a late Whistler etching, yet supercharged with effect like late Shakespeare. As soon as I can find comparisons in things I have previously learned to admire the approach to Wellesz' music becomes easier, and I can preen myself with the belief that I have discovered the hallmark of a final maturity. (The quartets of Beethoven could be drawn on too, had this line of criticism not already been overworked.) I would say that the most apt case here is Schönberg himself, whose latest works show a corresponding appreciation of lucidity.

I would cite the first movement of Wellesz' sixth Quartet as a fine example of modern style in this medium. True, the individual characteristics of so much of his former work are still present—the terrific unison themes, the single-bar *crescendo* to a strong *sforzando* quaver chord, the bright contrast of his *pianos* and *fortes*—but the short movement is well-knit and the pregnant themes treated throughout with distinction within the scheme of a unified form-pattern. The initial *Grave* leads to a nimble second subject marked *Comodo* and beginning with the viola *grazioso*. The tone-row is utilized for a pattern that lies neatly under the hand, and is treated with great contrapuntal skill. Its final inversion leads to a splash of *sul ponticello* brilliance that flashes like a beacon before the entrance of the condensed recapitulation, wherein the

second part of the second subject group and the second part of the first subject group are presented in a modified form with a quicker-moving pattern sometimes in the cello and again in the first violin. A piquant scherzo forms the second movement, followed by an *Andante, molto tranquillo* for the third movement. Here Wellesz' plan is an expressive festoon in the top part, ornamenting a two-bar figure divided among the other three instruments. There is opportunity for some sweet *cantabile* playing before embarking on the flexible yet powerful grandeur of the finale, tense at times, with never a note to be lost.

This is neither Schönberg nor Mahler, though Wellesz has learned from both. One might say that his place in the school of Schönberg is similar to that of Jung or Adler in the school of Freudian psychology. These men recognize their master but deviate from his line of action, though not from his basic principles. They reach a new interpretation that is equally valuable to society. So it is with Alban Berg and Egon Wellesz in relation to Schönberg, but with this difference between them, that Berg is more in tune with the temporary thought of the inter-war years, while Wellesz has always thought in more historical terms. Neither is so dogmatic a theorist as Schönberg. There should then be some affinity between Wellesz and the British people, who are after all conservative in the best sense of the word—wanting to build the future on the experience of the past. The fact that some of us have been led to disapprove of Central European developments during the present century is suspicious but understandable in the light of history. We glorified the Viennese school of music during the nineteenth century, and cultivated a type of Englishman who made much of overseas achievements to the detriment of his own country. So the counter-attack had to be made against our own fifth column in musical life. It has succeeded: provided British musicians and those of foreign extraction can meet on equal terms, judged according to the quality of their work. Neglect this simple truth and others will take advantage of it: once we were the venue of all ambitious musicians; now it is the U.S.A. Economic forces are operating against us, but if musical history tells us anything it is that art may flourish among nations of moderate means, like Italy in the eighteenth century or Bohemia in the nineteenth. Of those who fled from Central Europe in the 'thirties too few have chosen British nationality in preference to American, and we can ill afford to neglect those who have.

What has this to do with the string quartets of Egon Wellesz? Perhaps very little. His love of English culture had led him to draw on Shakespeare and Elizabeth Barrett Browning before he left Vienna, and the maturing of his mind might have led to simplification and condensation just as it did with Beethoven and Schönberg. This mental growth is not of any one age or of any period in history. It is, however, characteristic of the great mind as opposed to the inflated personality. It is the megalomaniac who is weak at the last.

Wellesz' seventh string Quartet consists of two movements only—a finely wrought *Allegro moderato* for the first, followed by an expressive *Adagio*, the theme of which, after 105 bars, is developed as a fugue. This Quartet is longer than the sixth, but still short as such works go. Wellesz in his later works is

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always terse and economical. The patterns are his own, and, once learned, grow on the memory—by turns forceful, piquant, soulful, nimble.

There has always been much that is Platonic in our cultural conditioning. I must be careful of my terms, because my dictionary, besides giving the common application of this adjective as we use it with the word "love", says also "confined to words or theory, not issuing in action, harmless or ineffectual". This latter meaning I certainly do not wish to imply. I use the word "Platonic" simply to describe the doctrines of Plato. No-one would deny the faith that in the past has been put in the power of music to mould the animal instincts:

"Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature."

Only of recent years has that doctrine come under suspicion among British musical educationists. Read any treatise on choral singing written during the nineteenth century and one is struck with the earnestness of those who believed that an oafish newly rich middle class and an ignorant working class could be civilized by the power of music allied to didactic verses. To-day we laugh at these notions, for already we have forgotten how amazingly successful the singing-class teachers were. Society was greatly improved by these people, but musical taste suffered appallingly at their hands.

Simply expressed, Plato saw the differences in states to be related to the characters of the people composing those states. Men may choose to be good or bad: brutish men will develop a brutish state—cultured men will develop a cultured state—moral men will develop a moral state. Educate men therefore in the qualities needed for an ideal state, by means of music and physical drill. The music must be such as will fill men's souls with socially desirable virtues, and not all the emotions were desirable: music therefore which cultivated undesirable emotions had to be outlawed, and those who composed it tactfully removed. Granted the modern view that this is detrimental to advanced music (as Damon indeed said) and therefore obnoxious to all progressive musicians, one must reject the theory of music's purpose being to serve the state; but one need not reject the theory that to create a musical ear there are certain musical idioms to be praised and others to be denounced. In my case Elgar and Handel were denounced as vulgar and Bach and Brahms held up as desirable. I was gullible, and I became the kind of man who in an election would have voted for the suppression of *Pomp and Circumstance*. Like the man at the street-corner prayer-meeting I now thank God I have seen the truth at last. Music must be judged on its own qualities and not with relation to that in other idioms, and I am by no means sure that my wise and wily mentors were honest to me even about Bach. I have no recollection of having been encouraged to study *The Art of Fugue*, and had the impression that, like the music of Wellesz, it was dry. Who told me this I cannot say. I know now that had I learned my *Art of Fugue* more thoroughly I should have had a broader mind.

But who am I so to confess and preach? I may be exceptional. Yet it seems to me that though we have no iron curtain in Britain, we can drop one of beautiful Victorian plush when it suits our purpose: and what could be more

music-proof? The nature of our young offers cause for some misgiving. In the University of California Schönberg was often embarrassed by clever young men who imitate his style without understanding it; but I see no signs of Oxford undergraduates embarrassing Wellesz in the same way. Are they making the right mistakes?

True, the Oxford University Opera Club will perform Wellesz' new opera *L'Incognita*⁵ in November next, but did they ask for such a thing to be written? Indeed no. The opera was read by their conductor, Professor J. A. Westrup, who then played it to their selection committee for two hours. As he expected, the opera appealed to them on its own merits, and no doubt he was able to convince them that the production was not beyond the means of the club, but one feels nevertheless that the opera needed an advocate. This is not the sincerest form of flattery. I would rather see Wellesz forced into the position of Schönberg when he protested against his imitators: "You'll see! I shall let down these boys some day and write a piece in C major", only—Wellesz would not need to use this particular example.

Wellesz' first Symphony is actually described on the title-page as in C; his sixth string Quartet is mainly in F minor, and his seventh string Quartet has the key-signature of three flats throughout. There is polytonal elasticity within their schemes, but their resources lie in the main stream of the sonata tradition. I can well understand the British distaste for atonality, since I share it myself, but this hardly affects the later work of Wellesz. Particularly is this true of the Octet, Op. 67, for string quintet, clarinet, bassoon and horn,⁶ commissioned by the Vienna Philharmonic Octet (who wanted a modern work to appear in the same programme as Schubert's Octet) and first performed by them at the Salzburg Festival of 1949. The adjective best applied to this is "tuneful". It consists of five movements, the first of which, *Sostenuto-Allegretto*, utilizes its two themes admirably, with a *fugato* in the middle section. The beauty of the second movement, *Adagio*, lies in the flow of its melodies and their combination. The violin has an accompanied *cadenza* in the midst. The third movement is a *Molto Vivace* with a trio for the three wind instruments, and is followed by an intermezzo, *Andante con moto*, where the mood, broken suddenly in the middle, eventually grows into a stronger expression of its former self. The fifth movement, *Comodo*, is a lively rondo. This Octet is a work that would normally be acceptable at a first hearing to music-lovers of modern tastes, and has been played with success in Italy, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, over the important radio networks of the U.S.A. and at last—on 16th March, 1951, in the Third Programme of the B.B.C. This surely is the time for a reconsideration of our attitude towards Wellesz' works, especially such as are likely to appeal to discerning music-lovers immediately.

⁵ *Libretto* by Elizabeth Mackenzie after the story by Congreve.

⁶ Lengnick, 1950.

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Covent Garden

WAGNER AND OTHERS

BY

A. E. F. DICKINSON

OPERA with an international cast and a choral-orchestral organization permanent, at least, for the Season, addresses at least four typical viewer-listeners. One will come for an evening of Opera; that is, for singing in a stage setting with orchestral accompaniment, with special attention to particular singers, but neutral tastes. Another hopes to experience an authoritative or at least generally competent rendering of a particular opera. He is prepared to pay or queue heavily to secure this. By C.G. estimates, about half their clients wish to hear Wagner not less than once, which implies a wider interest in saga, the orchestra and their relationship. A third spectator appreciates chiefly the ethical or religious pageant presented. A fourth considers what he enjoys or may enjoy at the Garden rather critically and abstractedly, as a decisive and prodigious expenditure of directive energy and executive talent in three or four directions—Wagner (7 works), Puccini (3), Verdi (2) and six Austrian, French and English composers (one opera apiece).

All these various ways of taking opera are part of our civilized life, and I found myself adopting each point of view in turn in the course of a short and rare visit from an outpost of our musical empire. For the many who have slender operatic opportunities, it was a genuine delight to hear on a visible stage so much spontaneous, sonorous, precisely pitched, dramatic and altogether impressive singing (and I myself prefer the continuous to the number-by-number style). I refer chiefly to the starry cluster of whom Kirsten Flagstad and Set Svanholm were inevitably assigned several main orbits, with Gottlob Frick, Sigurd Björling, Constance Shacklock and Edith Coates as recurrent figures, and in more specific appearances Astrid Varnay, Marko Rothmüller, Sylvia Fisher, Norman Walker, and, amazingly haunting in the one scene in which I heard him, Otakar Kraus. It was an equal delight to hear so much good wind-playing in the testing sustained passages. Special mention must be made of the first clarinet and her colleagues, whose liquid intonation was uncannily human. Blend was variable and rather disappointing in conditions which should allow for adequate rehearsal of most of the many *tutti*s which Wagner prepared so precisely. Karl Rankl seemed inclined to overplay climaxes and other points, and often to lack suppleness of rhythm, so that the orchestral drive was ironed out by attrition down to a monotonous level. The best moments for the ear were the brass-group entries by which, for example, the curse on blind ambition was steadily indented on the mind; or comparatively quiet episodes like the river-maidens' scene (Audrey Bowman, Rosina Raisbeck, Monica Sinclair) in *Götterdämmerung*. (It seemed more like that part of the Thames of which the American visitor inquired, "What is this stream?" than the flowing torrent capable of washing down a golden hoard annually.) Nevertheless, the united effort required even for one competent evening must not be underweighed, and I left *Götterdämmerung* wondering how it could be brought off again two days later. If swans fail to return, how much more could second violas be excused if they were slow or unsteady getting off the mark. That such incidents as a totally confused wind entry in *Walküre* were rare must be ungrudgingly admitted in favour of director and directed.

Of sets worth mentioning, the fire-work was properly awful—no reasonable person can imagine in the context that Wagner regarded this as a purely spectacular event—and the Valkyrie's rock credibly inaccessible. The handsome Gibichung Hall seemed extraordinarily open to the hostile world, and (as usual) the Great Door of Hunding's hut seemed to have been built to admit a hay-cart. The wide and unearthly spacing of the actors in the later Acts of *Walküre* had its advantages; but why was the interposition of Brünnhilde in the fight altogether shirked?

We may turn now to the claims of authentic interpretation, in the cross-section of five

evenings. *Walküre* (the extra performance) was of even interest almost throughout. Svanholm and Frick were finely matched, and the former's restraint at the end of the first act (leaving the music and the almost blatant symbolism to clarify intentions beyond a peradventure) was commendable. Edith Coates' Fricka, evidently bent on not being ludicrously indignant, was too suave and fugitive in expression to be quite convincing as an assertion of the moral law, in spite of an affecting quiet *cantabile* in the G sharp minor episode. Björling's Wotan was a good piece of singing, though not, prior to his "Farewell", of that characteristic quality which conveys the meaning when the words are unintelligible. Flagstad was a capable Sieglinde (even if she deserved a miscarriage for the way she bounced down the mountain path). As Brünnhilde, Astrid Varnay was rather too uniformly on the cold side, with all her rich *cantabile*, and her change of purpose was not dynamic enough; in maintaining the required two-octave compass, she was happier on the lower extensions. The Valkyries were a vigorous and often brilliant team of explosive officials.

Götterdämmerung began indifferently, but once brought down to earth and in fact back to the Nibelunglied, the drama seemed to inspire all concerned, with the slight qualification that as the king Rothmüller was not "strong" enough a weakling for Frick's admirable Hagen. As Guttrune, Sylvia Fisher was adroitly the compelling woman in the home for whose sake heroes will be heroes. The second act was altogether a fine production, from Alberich's malignant omnipresence to Hagen's final obeisance to it. Flagstad's restraint blended well with the concealed or complicated feelings of the rest, and with the broken up, less motive-driven music. Svanholm's Siegfried, heroic enough in the Prelude, was almost Bob Hope in its jauntiness to the bathing belles, but stayed out the prolonged course of that scene, and had many good and uncommon moments in his last hour. The end of the trilogy can never be truly satisfying. Its dramatic ambivalence, asserting and denying the life-force, is matched by an equivocal blend of strong and weak thematic succession or development. Flagstad emphasized the calm and under-sang the renunciation, and this was an acceptable compromise. The utter destruction of the known world (heaven as well as earth) should surely have been gonged more emphatically. Otherwise, the curtain went down with a deep sense of completion and very little wasted creative effort, apart from a certain quantity of "made" music (e.g. Hagen's narration, and the Norms').

It is possible to accept *The Nibelung's Ring* as an exposure of the fatal ambition that destroys wherever it goes until its objective ceases to count. So far the *Ring* cycle is a Morality in saga form. *Pilgrim's Progress*, giving the other sides of human ambition, is so other-worldly as to be scarcely dramatic, except to the imagination. Inevitably its interpretation has been not only pioneer work but in some sense *sui generis*. Arnold Matters heads a cast of some three dozen soloists, and the composer's well-known horror of sophistication has evidently kept anything like rhetorical splendour from the presentation. In a tremendous effort of contemplation, solo-work and orchestral development alike cultivate a defiant austerity in most of the twelve episodes which make up the work, and the style is characteristic but more reminiscent than advanced. The first performance was reviewed in the last issue (MR, XII/2, p. 160). Repeated in the middle of Wagner, the work made incidentally a refreshing contrast to the intense and insatiable self-regard of *Tristan*, and established itself as a *genre* which no one else has thought of cultivating, and which no one but Vaughan Williams could cultivate at the present time, sincerely and with the necessary experience of the fundamentalist style, in the liberal sense. The general subject has, indeed, been in the composer's mind for thirty years and, it is said, for twenty previous to that. As a stage event *Pilgrim's Progress* has been widely criticized, to a point of dismissal, for its barrenness and monotony, especially in the Apollyon and Vanity Fair scenes. Ultimately, however, it means all or nothing. If it strikes the spectator as escapism in the wrong place, the music will not easily suspend disbelief. If a far-reaching sense of purpose is recognized as a universal need, and oratorio as not enough, then the music implements the plain growth of that sense in dramatic form, culminating (not wilting) in the epilogue, as in *Saint Joan*. There is no doubt that on

30th May the Morality made a deep and refreshing impression on many present, and not only on the numerous clergymen to be seen in the auditorium.

This discussion reminds the listener who claims a wider concern for the national art that this is the only new work Covent Garden is launching, conventional or unconventional. Half the main energy of the Season has been put into Wagner, as usual. Few other composers could stand this test on a Wagnerian scale. That Wagner can do so is a renewed tribute to the insight and determination with which, a hundred years ago, he staked all on his capacity to blend the Word and the Orchestra. But the fact remains that with the thousands spent on this Wagner festival, some English composers could have been put more firmly on their feet. It is not a healthy sign that there is no one in England whose cultivation of national style in opera is so strong and established that Wagner may be said to be an encroacher on a good man's rights (and pocket), in death as in life. It must also be admitted that Arnold Matters, for instance, brought to *Pilgrim's Progress* a stage experience he had acquired, in a sense, in *Simone Boccanegra* at Sadler's Wells in the same week.

There was a time earlier in the century when Wagnerism stood for the assertion of free thought and the breaking down of barriers between the artist and his time. That Wagnerism now signifies the luxurious enjoyment of well-nigh classical certitudes is no credit to the progress of stage music in this country, whether it be in confessed opera or in some deliberate combination of drama with music. There is a depressing feeling about always having to say, "That was fine". It is much more stimulating to be able to declare, "That *does* need broadening out in the third act, and a different type of singer in the chief part, and a clearer harmonic texture in the second half". Let us be thankful that the C.G. management gave us one chance of being thus romantic.

To be fair on the greater organizers and greater British public, the night after *Götterdämmerung* I heard Barbirolli and the Hallé in Vaughan Williams' Fourth at a packed R.F.H. Encouraged by the conductor's *Heldenleben* gestures, the "Promenade" audience never doubted clouds would break, and when they did not, British stoicism (or phlegm?) still provided a generous round of applause for what they had received, acoustically, so clearly. The scope of this art of music, which appeals so directly through the senses, is always mystifying, and applause is often equivocal. Perhaps this is the wrong year for such comments. But a sense of paradox must be suggested. We cannot go on living almost entirely on the efforts of the past. Taste must be creative or face a perpetual decline.

Film Music and Beyond

THE DRAGON SHOWS HIS TEETH

Nor a Hollywood film title, but Hollywood itself. For long enough, Fafner has been watching in sleepy peace over the fatal gold he gained from the gods; at last Siegfried, in the disguise of three British delegates at the Florentine International Film Music Congress (1950), has made him spit venom from his nostrils. In fact, Mr. Lawrence Morton, music critic of *Hollywood Quarterly* (Los Angeles), is annoyed. He devotes a whole article—reprinted from *Hollywood Quarterly* in *Sight and Sound*—to Siegfried's approach; Antony Hopkins gives his retort in *opere citato*. Both articles should be read by everyone interested in music and uninterested in Hollywood music. The present article amends rather than doubles Mr. Hopkins' effort.

From the opening paragraph of Mr. Morton's piece:

"There is nothing in the current crop of film scores half so interesting as the discrepancies between Daniele Amfitheatrof's report on the reception given the exhibit of American film music at the International Music Congress at Florence and the reports of the British delegates. 'We had a good hand after every entry', wrote Mr. Amfitheatrof, 'and prolonged applause,

verging on an ovation, at the end of the show'. [Here Mr. Morton refers the reader to *Italy—Music and Films*, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Los Angeles, 1950.] Hans Keller, a British delegate and critic, this time restrained his penchant for a metaphysical and Freudian vocabulary. Instead he indulged in invective, calling the exhibit 'a repellent anthology' and noting that the assembly was composed of 'musicians who could hardly be expected to like the stuff'. [Here Mr. Morton refers the reader to *THE MUSIC REVIEW*, Vol. XI, No. 3, August, 1950, pp. 210–211, and goes on to cite Hopkins' report on the Congress, including a mention of Benjamin Frankel's denunciation of Hollywood music.] Obviously, strong national passions had been aroused which, together with a long-standing bias against Hollywood, prevented any discussion of aesthetic matters on an aesthetic level. This was most unfortunate for one would have expected, from an assembly only half so august as Mr. Keller deemed this one, a truly analytical and inquiring attitude towards at least two specific issues that came up for discussion."

Since Mr. Morton starts beside the point and *ad hominem*, I have to do likewise. I am not aware of having yet enlarged upon the metaphysics of music with which, at the same time, I cannot see anything wrong, except that it would be a curious undertaking to examine Hollywood music from this particular aspect. Mr. Morton may like to remind himself that Schopenhauer's metaphysics have enriched both Wagner's and Schönberg's knowledge of the nature of music; I do not know whether *Hollywood Quarterly* has yet attempted a task of similar import. A "Freudian vocabulary" I certainly do use in my capacity as musician-psychologist, but again it is difficult to see what is wrong with the psychology of musical composition, except that Fafner is about the only one who has reason to be afraid of it. By his describing my all too reticent understatements as "invective", Mr. Morton appears to imply that my article on the Film Music Congress contained fewer details than he would have liked to see; if he will read some of my other writings on film music in general and Hollywood music in particular, he will perhaps find more musical facts than he will like to see.

His assumption of "strong national passions" is silly nonsense. Frankel's stressedly international outlook is common knowledge; Hopkins has not yet given public expression to any kind of passion whatsoever; whereas the present writer—an Austrian-born, Jewish, naturalized Briton who during the short span of his life has been variously accused of (a) not being Austrian enough, (b) not being German, (c) being a Jew, (d) not being Jewish enough, (e) being German, (f) being too Austrian, (g) not being British enough, and (h) being too British—is hardly the most obvious type to go in for strong anti-rational national passions. He has in fact the deepest respect for American life and thought, but Hollywood music happens to contain neither.

Hopkins protests against Mr. Morton's accusation of "a long-standing bias against Hollywood"; I enthusiastically confess to it. My bias has developed from a conscientious study of Hollywood music—the most deadening task a contemporary musician can impose upon himself. Why, now, do I blame Hollywood instead of certain Hollywood composers? The overwhelming majority of Hollywood scores emit such a stench that one is forced to the conclusion that something is basically wrong with this film industry's musico-sociologico-economical set-up. I think I can foresee Mr. Morton's reply to this one, when I hasten to add that the purity of my heart and gall-bladder would satisfy the most perspicacious discoverer of un-American Activities. And even Aaron Copland, a kind being who does not readily dip his pen in gall and who, moreover, is not a completely independent observer inasmuch as (thank heaven) he contributes occasionally to Hollywood—even Copland has permitted himself the opinion that the music of the West Coast is "artistically of a low order". He generously adds that "the best one can say about Hollywood is that it is a place where composers are actually needed". I should say, the worst about Hollywood is that it is a place where composers are not needed. Copland's own observations hardly admit of a different conclusion. Writing of Ernst Toch's score for *Peter Ibbetson*, he points out that "on the strength of this job, Toch should be to-day one of the best-known film composers. But unfortunately there aren't enough people in Hollywood who can tell a good score when they hear one. To-day Toch is generally assigned to do 'screwy music' (in Hollywood music is either 'screwy' or 'down to earth'—and most of it is down to earth)". In short and mild, "most [Hollywood] scores are

written in the late-nineteenth-century symphonic style, a style now so generally accepted as to be considered inevitable". At the same time, Toch has at least preserved his integrity. I have followed the musical envelopment of at least three European talents who haven't. They have gone so completely to the dogs in Hollywood that their stuff is now undistinguishable from that of their analphabetic colleagues, and untraceable to their own pre-Hollywoodian work. So much for my bias against Hollywood. There is only one thing better than an unprejudiced approach, and that is to have the right prejudices.

Mr. Morton:

"The first issue was economy of instrumental resources . . . the larger issue of how and when to be economical appears to have been dodged. . . . One thing that can't be done with a string quartet is to equal the full sonority of an orchestral *tutti*, a noble and honourable sound. . . . The history of music gives no evidence that large sounds are inherently more vulgar than small ones. The crucial point, which the Congress overlooked, is that economy is a matter of style rather than of numbers of performers. It is style that makes a Mozart quartet sound more economical than . . . Schubert's . . . great G major."

It is quite true that Antony Hopkins has not analysed this question with sufficient precision. The sickening effect of empty extravagance which the typical, stereotyped Hollywood orchestration produces is not so much due to the strength of the forces employed as to their *disproportion*. That is to say, we hardly ever get that "full sonority of an orchestral *tutti*", that "noble and honourable sound", that "powerfully moving sonority of the full orchestra" on which Mr. Morton rhapsodizes with Hollywoodian emphasis; what we hear on most of Hollywood's sound tracks is a perversely *restricted* full orchestra serving an obscene homophony. Almost every Hollywood orchestration is literally top-heavy. The upper part pesters you almost throughout, predominantly in the form of violin saccharine, and violently predominating, *ad absurdum*, over the vague fakes and fillers of inner parts—in many cases there is no evidence at all of any 2nd violins!—and over the tuberculous bass. The brass is used in the most elementarily dialogic, chordal blocks, nor can the wood-winds be called differentiated: where they don't pad or double, they proffer one of those "characterizations" which double the picture and centuplicate themselves. Mr. Morton's mention of "the style that makes a Mozart quartet sound economical" reminds me that Fafner's harp not only explores his own imitations of nineteenth century music, but even advances into the eighteenth century. In my paper "Featured Music: 'Classical' Quotations", which as it happened immediately preceded Amfitheatrof's exhibition at the Congress, I said:

" . . . A rose thrown into a midden does not improve the smell, but rather starts to stink itself. Lionel Newman, for instance, Musical Director of last year's *Apartment for Peggy*, struck upon Mozart's clarinet Quintet—not a popular proposition by Hollywood standards. He (or his orchestrator) struck off the clarinet, and stuck on, so as to be dead wrong, *flute and harp*, mindful maybe of Mozart's Concerto for flute and harp, if unaware that Mozart disliked these two instruments throughout his life. The slow movement of the Quintet appeared *fully orchestrated*, and transposed to the key of the first movement, being thus used as suicide music. The minuet Mr. Newman first employed as background music to dialogue, and eventually, in its turn *fully orchestrated*, as 'end title music'. The second trio was streamlined by way of a hair-raising contraction. . . . Every musician, and nobody else, should see this film."

It seems that Hollywood does not altogether share Mr. Morton's respect for Mozart's economy of style. I put it to him that *outside Hollywood an equal outrage would be impossible*.

Mr. Morton continues:

"The other issue on which the Congress scolded Hollywood is the custom of using orchestrators instead of allowing (or obliging) composers to score their own music . . . the final judgment as to the correctness, style and practicability of an orchestrator's work can only be made by the composer."

Again, it is true that by its fairly exclusive concentration on the question of orchestration, Hopkins' speech at the Congress was liable to give rise to misunderstandings: the impression was created that Hollywood's orchestrations were the root of most evil, whereas they are merely the symptoms of a simple though devastating disease. To some extent

Frankel compensated for the defects of Hopkins' speech when, the day after the showing of Amfitheatrof's exhibits, he delivered a violent attack on them, suggesting (if I remember his exact words correctly) that their musical substance itself "reached the lowest imaginable depths"; but by that time the busy American delegate had left the Congress. The simple fact is that musically and creatively speaking there isn't such a separate thing as orchestration, and that the division of work between "composer" and "orchestrator" is only possible, in fact necessary, *where the composers can't compose, or can but don't*. *A posteriori*, of course, the symptom becomes in its turn a cause, by way of a vicious circle: the presence of the arranger or orchestrator makes it possible, indeed desirable, that an idiot should occupy the position of the composer. It is thus that Mr. Morton arrives at his shattering rhetorical question:

"Is there any valid reason why the inventive musician who lacks craft, and the capable workman who lacks inventiveness, should not join forces to produce something for which there is a market? It is not the collaboration that should be condemned but the eventual output, if it is indeed *Kitsch*. I see no reason why Messrs. Keller, Frankel and Hopkins should not accept it on the basis of the sounds made, regardless of who made them."

From the fact that a capable workman may lack inventiveness Mr. Morton derives the silent assumption that an inventive musician may lack craft and thus need an arranger; and while we do not "accept" the musical products of Hollywood on the basis of the sounds made, it was our having to reject them on this basis that made us worry in the first place about what happened behind the scenes. As Hopkins points out, somewhat belatedly, in his reply to Mr. Morton, "the point at issue at the Congress was never one of expressing a lack of confidence in the abilities of the orchestrators; their technique is unquestionable if at times their taste is not. The finger of suspicion was pointed at the 'composers' ". But it must be added that the unbearable standardization of Hollywood orchestrations is undoubtedly more directly due to the good orchestrators than to the bad composers.

Scoring is an aspect of invention. It has remained for Hollywood to discover the talent so pure and modest that it has not learned to express itself, to offer, at last, every opportunity to the dumb genius, to the creator who gets ideas without having them, to the thinker so abstract and transcendental that the power of his invention does not make him, but on the contrary forbids him to learn how to write a score.

At the Congress, Hopkins did not point his "finger of suspicion" with anything like sufficient force and precision at the *composers*, but he makes ample amends in the eloquent final paragraph of his reply:

"Who are these people, whose names never seem to appear on any concert programmes? What else have they written; what pages have they placed upon the altar of Art, rather than on the lap of Mammon? When we hear music which so depends on the artifice of the scoring, when we hear page after page of 'effects' with no development, no continuity, and little individuality, are we really being so impertinent if we are tempted to doubt the qualifications of the man behind it? I do not mind if Copland has a glorified copyist to do his dirty work for him, because I know from the concert world that he is a composer of stature, and a man whom one can trust."

This last in reply to Mr. Morton's reddest herring:

"Aaron Copland . . . has always used orchestrators when working in Hollywood. Yet their hands are never observable in the music for the simple reason that Copland's sketches are so complete that no other musical personality has an opportunity to intrude itself upon his music."

Exactly. In point of fact, Copland's film music shows how the cinema, far from being legitimized to serve "the inventive musician who lacks craft" as a lucrative playground, can offer the real composer opportunities for original creative scoring, for novel functional sonorities. Copland's last (though, incidentally, by no means best) score to date, for instance, *i.e.* that for *The Heiress* (Paramount Pictures, 1948-49), superimposes by way of dubbing a string-orchestral over the orchestral sound-track, the string orchestra being divided into the wood, brass and string parts of the underlying full orchestra. Mr. Morton has not so far noticed how effectively the strongly national Copland paralyses our strong national passions.

It is our artistic passion that makes us, now that Fafner has risen from his lair, draw our sword and stand in defiance. The anti-artistic influence of Hollywood's music does not merely extend far beyond the cinema, but is in all likelihood the most tenacious musical enemy of culture in the history of our civilization. I shall regularly devote some of the present feature's space to particularized criticisms of Hollywood and shall be the first to praise where praise is musically due. Meanwhile the fight is on. Not, of course, against Mr. Morton as a person, nor even as an independent musician: certain remarks in both his present article and one of a year ago (where, if we remember correctly, he drew attention to the fact that Copland's title music for *The Heiress* was deleted and replaced by another composer's stuff, as well as to the need for musical film music criticism) tend to show that if the Hollywood composers whom he appears to shield out of a mistaken sense of loyalty were as musical as he, he would have no reason to get annoyed with us.

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First Performances

SCHÖNBERG—SCHÖNBERGIAN—VIA SCHÖNBERG

Schönberg: (a) *A Survivor from Warsaw* for speaker, male chorus and orchestra; (b) *Fantasia* for violin and piano. Roberto Gerhard: Concerto for piano and string orchestra. Fricker: Sonata for violin and piano. Cooke: Quartet for oboe, violin, viola and cello. Frankel: Concerto for violin and string orchestra. Alan Bush: *The Nottingham* Symphony.

BEFORE I came to understand—or, to put it more truthfully and modestly, to divine—Schönberg, I knew that great music had to come from, and go to, another world, but it never occurred to me that music could encompass three other worlds—God, the remotest thinkable future, and the remotest feelable past. But then, it is of the essence of genius that he not only *says* for the first time, but also *is* for the first time. Every genius is the first genius. Thus, while every talent has to put up with *wrong criticisms from the ignorant*, it is the tragedy of genius alone that he is greeted with *irrelevant criticisms from the knowledgeable*.

It is quite in keeping with the profound consistency which underlies, indeed creates, Schönberg's proverbial paradoxes that his first *topical* work (the simple English text is his own) should be extremely and doubly unctemporary: it is the still-*present* shock of the Nazi pogrom, what one might call the artistic trauma, that makes it possible for the composer to dive deeply into our instinctual, primordial *past*; and Schönberg is able to turn even this primitive past towards and into the musical *future*. The situation of the "Survivor" (1947) comprises the highest and the lowest of which man is, and will always be capable; hence it is the first, and no doubt the last, topical situation which the aged anti-topicalist *par excellence* felt forced to face.

The violin *Fantasia* (1949) confirms one's impression that Schönberg is the only forward-looking composer who can still conceive extended, unfolding melodies. As far, and only so far as this particular aspect of musical composition is concerned, an opinion which is often and quite wrongly attributed to Schönberg may in fact contain a large measure of truth, namely, that the diatonic system is exhausted. It seems, at any rate, that all good modern diatonic, post-diatonic, pandiatonic, or chromatic major and minor

music works under the (for the good composer, inspiring) limitations which the history of harmony has imposed upon melodic growth, and which were bound to set in when a certain point in the raising of the norm of dissonance was reached. Beethoven, no doubt the father of this melodic crisis, also prepared for its eventual resolution in twelve-tone thought. Schönberg is the first to continue where Beethoven left off; significantly enough, it has remained to Schönberg to discover, for instance, the (*a posteriori*, obvious) inversion of the retrograde form of the inversion of the "Muss es sein?" motif in Op. 135's first movement's first subject's consequent:¹ you cannot discover such things until you have exhaustively experienced the musical content.

The contemporary music-loving fool is wise through self-pity: his perpetual complaint that modern music is tuneless is more perceptive than he. Of course, he would have to except good twelve-tone music instead of enthusiastically including it in his reproaches, but then you can't expect a fool to realize that consequent upon the absence of harmonic cadences, of rhythmic symmetry and patterns, of contrasts in harmonic colour, twelve-tone melodies need other phrasic articulations and demarcations such as would result in melodic bits and pieces in diatonic music (*i.e.* on top of harmonic articulations). Mediocre twelve-toners do in fact gladly avail themselves of this hell-sent opportunity to hide their lack of melodic invention behind a bitterness that pretends to be but apparent. Their music depends on the listener's uneasy awareness that his would-be criticisms are ultimately inspired by his diatonic background.

All of which is to say that to regard Schönberg as bitty is to mistake either his methods for those of his small followers, or his structural principles for those of his great forerunners: it is a doubly easy mistake. Far from his melodic flowering being recognized, the tightest of his structures are liable to be regarded as formless or—if the observer feels more than he knows—euphemistically as loose. The *Fantasia* offered, because of its title, a special opportunity for such misguided comment. One of the *Times* critics who is by no means insensitive to Schönberg's genius let the title explain the form which, in his quite favourable opinion, appeared to be the result of the composer's free flight of fancy. Now, while I cannot pretend to have grasped the build sufficiently (the work is difficult and the first performance was bad), I am absolutely sure that it has little, if anything, to do with conventional conceptions of a *fantasia*, with "loose" form—that this music's organization could not, in fact, be firmer and tighter. One holds it in one's fist before one grasps it: a reversal of natural law such as only the deepest, least flighty forms can produce. The basic structural principle employed seemed to me to be what one might call the *involution of developmental variation*, *i.e.* developmental variations on developmental variations on developmental variations. . . . Not only is everything unnecessary omitted from this piece, but also everything which follows so inevitably that it need not be stated. Thus the listening mind does not get those minutes of repose afforded by concretely expected sequences, rhythmic continuations, *etc.*; in order to be able to take in what is being said, one is forced throughout to realize what (to Schönberg) goes without saying.

I am suppressing my promised criticisms of Roberto Gerhard's viola Sonata (1949):² I gather from what seems an authoritative source that the composer himself dislikes the work, in which circumstances the less said about it the better, particularly since his more recent piano Concerto (1951) shows him well on the way towards making Schönberg's technique his own by adapting it to the character of his own ideas; though for the moment there appears to be some discrepancy between the twelve-tonal style and the regularity of certain rhythmic phrase structures. What is beyond doubt is that the—up to a point—well-built slow central movement, in free variations, is too long not only for the listener but also for itself; probable, too, that texturally the work is at times overburdened, though final judgment must be deferred to a second hearing in better acoustic circumstances than those obtaining in the Parish Church at Aldeburgh.

¹ Schönberg, A., "Composition with Twelve Tones", in *Style and Idea*, New York, 1950, and London, 1951. Meyerstein, E. H. W., "A Master's Testament", *MR*, May, 1951.

² "First Performances", *MR*, May, 1951.

The style of Fricker's violin Sonata (1950), whose tonality proceeds from the A minor end of the first movement to the D (major) end of the slow third and last, conjures up an impression of dough. Nevertheless, the work impresses by its very defects, in that they reveal the artist in advance of his technique—for instance, in general, his striking vertical formations which make for harmonic shortsightedness (one cannot really speak of a harmonic structure at all); or, in particular, the extremely forced continuation (prepared by an, in itself, unmotivated piano figure) of a highly original *adagio* theme which a lesser composer might have worsened for the sake of better consequences. Again and again, when I hear Fricker, I realize that the bad can be good because it is bad—a truth which Schönberg explained several decades ago when discussing the young Wagner:—

Starting from what, at that time, everyone understands by music, his own [music] follows first of all the single need to express itself somehow, without asking in the least whether it is Beautiful or New, whether it has Style or Art. But without his noticing it, features emerge which foreshadow his development. Sometimes it is merely that he cannot manage something which any old workman would have accomplished faultlessly. Here he has inhibitions which are destined to provide his stream with a new bed. Another time it is something positive: an idea, some immediate, unconscious, often brutal, at times almost childish expression of his nature. . . .³

Not, of course, that all the Sonata's shortcomings are similarly redeemed; the use of the mute in the middle movement (*allegretto*), for instance, is musically inexplicable. Our great composers knew very well why they never muted the violin in a sonata. At last, during the central portion of the movement, the mute is removed, only to give way to the modern practice of employing the violin as a percussion instrument. In this section, too, there suddenly pops up a (horizontally) diatonic scale figure without harmonic rhyme or reason—as far as I can make out solely for the sake of piquancy.

The Cooke (1948) is in G—concentric tonally like his other instrumental works⁴ except for the first numbered string Quartet (1933). The comparatively narrow tonal frame is classically inspired, the first of the three movements availing itself of the dominant as second stage, while the slow one recedes to the relative minor and proceeds to its tonic major. The style, too, roots firmly in the past, stretching back over and beside Hindemith to pre-classical as well as classical sources of inspiration, clearly betraying, at the same time, the composer's nationality. Perhaps the most conservative aspect of the work, however, is that of rhythmic structure and melodic *outline* (as distinct, self-evidently, from the actual notes). Yet it seems to me that however much Cooke may have learned from Hindemith, it is the latter, more than the old models, who at times endangers the full expression of his individual mind. This occasional absence, rather than a lack, of originality molests one's extreme enjoyment of a quite exceptionally clean and clear texture, of music that was really and fully auralized before it was committed to paper and performance.

Frankel's violin Concerto (1951) shows perhaps even more "growth" than one who knows more about the composer than I expected,⁵ in their essentially violinistic conception of the violin, too, the four movements stand almost alone among recent works in this *genre*. This highly original and deeply felt composition will repay the closest study, which will have to take into account, among many other aspects, Frankel's astoundingly creative renoucement of the *ritornello* principle.

The other left-winger on our list needs another reviewer: my reaction to this Symphony (1949) was so completely negative that I doubt whether I am entitled to criticize it. While I am, however, in sincere and full sympathy with Bush's strictly thematic style, I think that even those who appreciate the Symphony's content and harmonic idiom better than I, will have to agree that the form is over-integrated. As for the folkloristic elements, I could not help thinking, however unfairly, of a recent essay by another and different thematicist.⁶

H. K.

³ Schönberg, A., *Harmonielehre*, Leipzig-Vienna, 1911.

⁴ Clapham, J., "Arnold Cooke", *Music Survey*, June, 1951.

⁵ Wood, R. W., "Benjamin Frankel", *Music Survey*, June, 1951.

⁶ Schönberg, A., "Folkloristic Symphonies", in *op. cit.* n. (1).

Opera

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

COVENT GARDEN, 29TH MAY

I LAST heard this opera on 15th November, 1948 (MR: X, 1). I have not the programme, but at least five members of the cast were the same, and the *décor* exactly the same, so far as I could see: *i.e.* a sea curtained off completely in act I, and nothing to suggest the crew was doing anything, only a rope wagging occasionally; the Verlaine-like *parc* with its eighteenth-century seat in act II; and that perfectly incredible tree with a mop of hair not unlike a well-known caricature of Berlioz in act III. I found myself comparing Kirsten Flagstad (all voice and operatic presence) with Astrid Varnay, with her great restraint in gesture and suggestion of a woman wise in cures. There is no mystery in Flagstad, only splendid vocalization (what one expects in Wagner) and no pathos, histrionically speaking. Svanholm's Tristan is much stronger than it was in '48 and he stood up manfully to Flagstad. Constance Shacklock has got more nervous inquietude into Brangäne than when I last heard her, and though I missed Hans Hotter as Kurwenal, Sigurd Björling filled the part adequately and did not make his joyous transports ridiculous in act III as some Kurwenals do. Norman Walker (Mark), Edgar Evans (Young Seaman) and David Tree (Shepherd) were as I remembered them. Krauss, in my opinion, does not conduct *Tristan* as well as Rankl; I missed the mystery of the horns at the beginning of act II, and the sonorous blocks of sound in the prelude to act III, not quite so basalt-like. But oh! how unheroic this music-drama is with its drugged hero and heroine spouting Schopenhauerian Buddhism and the cuckold king like Patience on a monument. I felt this more this time because Astrid Varnay *did* make Isolde pathetic before she took the potion.

DIE WALKÜRE

COVENT GARDEN, 31ST MAY

It is a curious indication of the identity in difference of English taste through the centuries that the heroic Restoration drama of Dryden, Otway and Lee, that would attract no one but a bibliophile to Covent Garden in these times, not only survives but draws huge quasi-intelligent audiences under the form of Wagnerian music-drama. Here are all the features that delighted the eighteenth century theatre-goers, who thronged to hear the declamation of Mills, Quin, Garrick, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Crawford and the Siddons; the rhetorical strutting passions, the start and the shrug, the grand dialogued tirades, the scenic magnificence and ineptitude all are there, with the exception that the actors do not speak but sing. The collection of highly motivated and spasmodic duologue-recitatives that make up *Die Walküre*, plus a noisy orchestra and a gymnastic spearshaking female chorus (Weber's "Uhui" hypertrophied) at the start of the third act, does duty for the heroic play in which our ancestors delighted and I for one would far prefer the pristine less sophisticated entertainment.

The two Scandinavians, Set Svanholm and Kirsten Flagstad, were tremendous as Siegmund and Sieglinde, and the former's costume and wig suited him better than in *Tristan*. The most human performance was Edith Coates', who has come on enormously as Fricka since 1948 (see MR: IX, 2). Astrid Varnay does not bring the romance to Brünnhilde as she has done to Isolde, but I could not find fault otherwise with her conception of the part, beyond saying that I should have preferred to hear her as Sieglinde and Flagstad, as of old, as Brünnhilde. Björling was a fine static melodramatic Wotan, who always reminds me of the Governor of Tilbury Fort in *The Critic*,

"The father softens—but the governor
Is fix'd!"

and Hunding (Gottlob Frick) after a shockingly unheroic fight with Siegmund (who rolled down the rocks very prettily) succumbed to the incensed deity just as he should. The chorus did their best to show that Wagner's characters are not invariably rooted where they stand. The fire was good—it might have been lent by the pantomime staff of Drury Lane for the occasion—and no accident happened to Wotan in the course of it as in '48 (see MR, *loc. cit.*). Karl Rankl conducted in the melodramatic tradition. E. H. W. M.

Book Reviews

Johann Sebastian Bach. By Hans Engel. Pp. 252. (Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin.)

Of the making of books about Bach there is no end; even the special aspects of his life and work are pretty well covered by (usually) good monographs. A new "life-and-works" must produce good credentials. Let it be said at once that Dr. Engel has produced an efficient, well-balanced piece of work. It is divided roughly into one-third "life" and two-thirds "works", which is the right proportion for most musical "lives-and-works", and the "life" is mostly musical biography, a record of musical environments and—so far as they can be traced chronologically—influences. The study of the music begins properly with Bach's musical symbolism and with the least ambiguous employment of the symbolism, in the cantatas; thence Dr. Engel proceeds to the larger choral works and finally to the instrumental music. As one would expect, he is particularly good on his own special field of the concertos. In dealing with the choral works, he shows the inter-borrowings very usefully in tabulated form. (Incidentally, he rejects—and is surely right in rejecting—Terry's theory that *Die Wahl des Herkules* and other secular works were quarried from the *Christmas Oratorio*, instead of vice-versa.)

A good deal of the book's value is due to its incorporation of the results of recent German research on Bach during the war and immediately pre-war years: particularly the work of Friedrich Smend and Hermann Keller, but above all Schering's *J. S. Bach und das Musikleben Leipzigs im 18. Jahrhundert*. Engel's remarks on key-types in Bach's thematic material confirm Paul Mies' observations in his recent *Charakter der Tonarten*.

There are, on the other hand, signs of hurry and carelessness in both the writing and the production of the book. There are a number of instances of repetitiveness: the same information being given in more than one place. And sometimes the double references show the author in the state of being unable to make up his mind; on p. 29 the D minor klavier Concerto is a transcription "wohl eines fremden Werkes"; on p. 219, although "its genuineness has been doubted" and some passages seem "not completely Bachian", yet if it is "really only based on the work of some other master, the other must have been of Bachian greatness". And Engel then proceeds to give fairly convincing arguments for the work's genuineness.

Hasty proof-reading has overlooked some displacements of blocks of text and (pp. 205–6) allowed Johann Jakob Walther to attain the fine old age of 130, of which the last sixteen years were spent in Dresden. It is more seriously surprising to find Dr. Engel accepting as genuine the "Frescobaldi" fugue in G minor, the bogusness of which was exposed by Benvenuti thirty years ago.

Many readers, in England as well as Germany, will applaud the remark on the last page:

The great choral performances of the Bach *Passions* preserve scarcely anything of Bach's spirit. Giant choir and orchestra, in which a few old instruments are planted from an affectation of "stylistic fidelity", dynamic, agogic, colour effects, such as the *a cappella* performance of the final chorale dying away *pianissimo*, opera singers with styles more suitable for Verdi, a star conductor, an audience aesthetically tuned, all prepared to admire: thus Bach's work is falsified in actual sound, in method of performance and sociologically.

G. A.

Jahrbuch der Musikwelt. Herausgegeben von Herbert Barth. Wissenschaftliche Redaktion Dr. Richard Schaal. 1. Jahrgang 1949-50. Pp. 696. (Verlag Julius Stäger, Bayreuth; Hinrichsen Edition Ltd., London.) 38s. 6d.

This is the first attempt at an international "Yearbook of the Musical World". It consists of four sections. First, there is a series of articles, including a very extensive biography of Bernhard Ziehn, the German-American music theorist, by H. J. Moser; there are also obituary notes and reports on the present state of French and American music as well as on the musical life in Vienna, Salzburg, Copenhagen and Bayreuth. The second part is dedicated to bibliographical and statistical matters, containing a useful list of German *Dissertationen* from 1885 till 1948. Under the heading *Kleine Beiträge* there are articles on three music publishing houses.

The most important part, occupying more than half of this annual, is modestly entitled *Nachschlageteil* (reference section) and arranged by Margarete Raba and Heinz Riedelbauch. It is divided into twenty-three chapters, the last of which, wrongly entitled *Musikschaefende* (creative musicians), is subdivided under forty headings. Here is to be found information about music libraries, museums, institutions, schools, church music, choirs, orchestras, opera houses, concert halls, managers, broadcasting, films, records, publishers, printers, instrument makers, agents and corporations. Among the lists of *Musikschaefende* are the names of musicologists, critics, teachers, conductors, singers, players, dancers, etc. The details given for Great Britain are incomplete, and often out of date; but the publishers hope to improve them in the next volume. For the United States the list of the members of the American Musicological Society has been added as a supplement.

On the whole, this seems to be a good start, and if the editors and their collaborators succeed in getting the necessary details from countries abroad, the annual might become an important reference book for all musicians. There is, in the second half, too much rubbish included to meet the vanity of possible subscribers, and the editorial part is too heavy for a reference book. Moser's contribution occupies about a hundred pages, i.e. more than one-eighth of the volume. How would one like to find in the London Telephone Directory half a volume dedicated to the life of Bell? And Ziehn was no Bell in musicology.

Der musikalische Humanismus im 16 und frühen 17 Jahrhundert. By D. P. Walker. Pp. 76. (Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel and Basel.) 1949.

This is a translation of an essay first published in *THE MUSIC REVIEW* in five instalments (vol. II, nos. 1-4, and vol. III, no. 1, 1941-42). The German version is printed as no. 5 of a series of musicological studies, edited by the *Gesellschaft der Musikforschung*, with an introductory note by its chairman, Prof. Friedrich Blume, and a preliminary note by the author. The essay is of special interest for German scholars because it continues the studies of Renaissance music theory started, in about 1920, by Theodor Kroyer and his pupils. The anonymous translation seems faithful and reads fluently German, if not more easily than the original.

O. E. D.

The Grammar of Conducting. By Max Rudolf. Pp. xvi + 350. (Schirmer: Chappell.) 1950. 45s.

There is no form of musical performance where technique differs so much as in conducting. When it is a case of string or pianoforte playing, all performers use basically similar modes of execution. With conductors, however, there are no two who use the baton even remotely in the same way. There would seem to be hundreds of methods in the technique of this comparatively recent branch of musical performance. The conductor, as we know him to-day, is barely one hundred years old, but it does not appear that, with the passing of time, his stick technique shows any signs of becoming standardized.

A critic, writing recently in *The Times*, defined three of the basic requirements of a conductor as, "first, a naturally spacious rhythm in which, whatever the speed, there is plenty of room for the music to move; second, a clear mental picture of what he wants in the shaping of phrases and the fluctuatings of dynamics before he lifts his stick; and thirdly, he should convey this to his players clearly, without fuss and without the sheer obstruction by careless gestures of psychological suggestion that some conductors involuntarily interpose between themselves and their orchestras". These requirements are slightly more elaborate than those stipulated by Wagner, who said that the functions of a conductor were to indicate the correct speed of the music and to bring out the tune.

Mr. Rudolf's book is a treatise on the subject of conducting, with which the only comparison that I know is Scherchen's *Handbook of Conducting* published some years before the war. Both books go into the subject in greater detail than one would have even thought possible, and one is quite appalled by the industry which must have gone into the making of them. The trouble is that any student embarking on a course of conducting, and following Mr. Rudolf's indications at all slavishly, would soon find himself lost in a wood where he could see nothing but trees. It seems to me that the fundamental laws of time beating can be taught and learnt quite simply and quickly, and that anything else, such as varieties of beat, is an utterly individual thing varying to an enormous extent with each conductor, and quite impossible to convey in a textbook. Mr. Rudolf makes a gallant attempt to dissect every minute movement that a conductor might make during the performance of certain pieces of music. When we get to the end of it we find we are really back at the point where we started, and we realize that if the conductor is to be a vital and individual artist, as he must be if he is any good at all, the mere style and variations of time beating must be left to grow naturally with his artistic perception. It is not anything that can be taught.

This book has the advantage over the Scherchen of much more suitable music examples, all well known, and all pieces which the average conductor is bound to encounter sooner or later. If we must have such books on conducting, then this is a great example of its kind, and for any conductor who is interested in analysing movements which he has been making automatically for years, it offers plenty of entertainment. My feeling is, however, that if a student has got the right stuff in him, he will make all these complicated motions quite naturally without the help of any books, because they will spring straight from the music itself.

Harmony for Listeners. By Douglas Turnell. Pp. 191. (Cassell.) 1950. 15s.

Here we have another of the rapidly growing "music without tears" type of books which have become so popular in the last few years. This seems a good example of its kind, but I feel that it goes into the subject perhaps a little too much in detail for the type of listener it is written for. The examples are well chosen, and the music enthusiast will find all he wants to know about fundamentals of harmony.

There is a strange mistake on page 171, where the finale of Mozart's Symphony No. 39 in E flat is described as that of Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony No. 41 in E flat (*sic*). B. N.

The Major Scale, Simply Explained. By E. J. Creedy. Pp. 72. (O.U.P.) 4s. od.

This disarming title covers a workmanlike effort to expound the physical rationale of tonality. The writing style is dull, but the author achieves his object and no student of either physics or music should fail to gain proper instruction as a result of putting up with his pedantry for ten brief chapters.

Two simple matters which, every so often, cause debates in music schools, and even flurries of correspondence in the daily press, are cleared up in language that the lay person can understand.

About the first of these, Mr. Creedy does not beat about the bush. He states, and he repeats: "There is only one major scale". That fact should be evident without this present instruction. But we still meet critics and writers of programme notes who

tell us that a Mozart concerto for a wind instrument is in the "bright key" of E \flat major, or that there is this or that aesthetic reason behind Wagner's choice of C major, for much of *Meistersinger*. They will, of course, go on saying such things. Mental association is very strong, and it is this which prompts uninstructed writers to assign different characters to different keys. Thus E \flat and B \flat are "bright" keys for some of us because most brass band marches are written in those keys, and are so written for reasons similar to those which determine the choice of E \flat and B \flat for wood wind so often by classical composers. And anyone who does not know what those reasons are ought to read up something about wind instruments and not bother their heads about harmony. The other simple point nicely explained is why chamber music "feels" different from keyboard or orchestral music, and, conversely, why some string players are embarrassed by keyboard accompaniments. Good value for four shillings.

Piano Interpretation. By Donald N. Ferguson. Pp. 348. (Williams & Norgate.) 1950. 15s. od.

The sub-title of this book is "Studies in the Music of six great composers". They are Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Brahms and Debussy. The author takes a representative number of the piano works of these composers and, in short, tells us how he thinks we should play them.

Now what is the object of a book of this kind? Piano technique can only be acquired one way, and that way makes no call for books. Piano interpretation—and this is essentially what the author is offering—is something the gifted performer must work out for himself if he can. If he cannot, he should change his trade. Soloists who are not also musicians in head and heart as well as hands should not be encouraged and do not, in any case, reach eminence. It follows, therefore, that the book is meant for the learner, the amateur, the player who wants to get more out of the piano than he has in his own fingers. These classes of performer will rarely be able to play the works analysed by the author to a standard which could possibly be affected by a reading of what he says. The author's well-written and musicianly texts can only be brought to life two ways: either by Donald Ferguson the pianist performing his own interpretations, or by Professor D. N. Ferguson standing over his more gifted pupils and, at the right moments in their performances, illuminating this or that passage of a given work with his musicianship. Interpretation in music is one of those subtle and elusive forms of culture which cannot be given away, even inside the covers of a book. It can be communicated only by listening and experiencing, and only then if the receiver is a potential musician and the giver is an inspiring human being. The thought of droves of hopeful amateurs buying this book in the hopes of learning how to "interpret" the *Ballades* of Brahms or the *Preludes* of Debussy may have encouraged the publishers in what the author has frankly described as "an experiment". It appals this reviewer in its waste and futility. And if the author believes, from his experience since the book first appeared in the U.S., that self-respecting teachers of piano are going to put his "interpretations" into the hands of their own students, then there must be, in America, a very different attitude to the imparting of musical culture from that which exists in Europe. Possibly

J. B.

François Couperin. By Wilfrid Mellers. Pp. 412. (Dobson.) 1950. 30s.

In Wilfrid Mellers the permanent symbiosis of composer and scholar has for once resulted in spectacular success. The composer has made a name for himself during recent years as one of the few clear-cut individualities so far emerging from Benjamin Britten's generation. The scholar—after his very stimulating, yet still somewhat prelude-like *Music and Society*—has delivered his first undisputable masterpiece with the present volume which fills a real gap in modern musicography. The vivid picture of Couperin le Grand and his remote epoch, drawn with unfailing hand by an expert in its manifold artistic and intellectual problems, is all the more timely as it recommends the cultural values inherent in a severely stylized and obviously aristocratic society to an epoch of

indiscriminate cultural *Gleichschaltung*. This courageous pronouncement deserves to be disseminated in all directions (cf. page 27):

"... Couperin's culture was a minority culture, and it was doomed from the start; many things about it were foolish, and some were wicked. This does not alter the fact that it entailed values and standards which no serious conception of civilization can afford to ignore. . . ."

His book, analyzing with loving care and profound understanding the makings of a deliberate style in music, is a comprehensive reply to the agonized and unsuccessful quest for style in our own day. The mysterious anonymity in which great composers of the past lived and died has severely curtailed the biographical section of Mellers' book. He waxes all the more eloquent when discussing Couperin's work, which is treated in six exhaustive chapters and delineated against the colourful background of the age of Louis XIV. A special delight are chapters V and XI, dealing with Couperin's great fore-runners (from Titelouze to Chambonnières and to the distinguished members of his own family) as well as with his contemporaries and later imitators (from Rameau and Leclair to Dandrieu and Dagincour). For students of older French music Mellers' book will come as a godsend. A prodigious number of music illustrations goes a long way to drive home the author's cogent and often enthusiastically worded arguments. These musical illustrations (as well as the pictorial plates, selected with good taste and a definite penchant for the flavour of the period) are immaculately reproduced but suffer somewhat from the fact that their sources are not always clearly indicated. (They share this feature with many distinguished music books of to-day. May we ask in the case of future reprints for an index of musical illustrations in the appendix section of Mellers' volume?) The author has made a special point of clarifying the relations of Couperin le Grand to his other great contemporaries, and he has admirably succeeded for instance in the case of J. S. Bach (cf. page 25). Equally convincingly he has linked Couperin's stylistic achievements with recent developments in French music from Fauré to Ravel, who seem to have integrated subconsciously so much of Couperin's racial heritage. In this connection Mellers could have mentioned Richard Strauss who received a decisive stimulus from Couperin in later life, so gloriously reflected in his *Couperin Suite* of 1922. Mellers deserves special thanks for dealing extensively with the music not specially designed for the clavecin. Although Couperin clearly belongs to the selective type of artist, confining himself more or less exclusively to the keyboard like Frescobaldi before and Chopin after him, yet his church music, his secular vocal works and his sonatas and suites for string *ensemble* abound in beautiful and inspired pages. The author is also completely alive to the thorny problem of *Aufführungspraxis* when he ends the main section of his book (cf. page 340) with a convincing plea for a "practical performing edition", which clearly should start exactly at the point where the magnificent Lyre Bird Press set has stopped. He has done his utmost to pave the way for such a "scholarly practical edition" by dedicating a main section of his book (part III) to "Theory and Practice", elucidating Couperin's theoretical work, explaining his ornaments, phrasing and notation and suggesting a sensible manner of modern performance for the different sections of his music (cf. *op. cit.* page 322 ff.). In a copious appendix of more than 60 pages the music is listed with exact references to the first edition and to the respective volumes of the Lyre Bird edition of to-day (contributed by Charles Cudworth). There is also a list of gramophone records, a very comprehensive bibliography of original texts and modern works of reference and a twofold index. Among the beautiful plates one misses a facsimile of Couperin's handwriting and one wonders if this omission has been necessitated by the fact that no autograph of his has reached posterity. A note on this interesting problem would have been welcome.

In a book of such painstaking scholarship occasional slips may easily occur and should not be made much of. The following small list of *Errata* is therefore offered not in a critical spirit but as a humble contribution to a future edition.

Page 284: the number of the footnote should read 27.

Page 32: the quotation from the French should read: "le moi est haïssable".

Page 146: Monteverdi's *Vespers* and *Magnificat* were not composed for St. Mark's, Venice, but for Rome. They were written and published in 1610, while Monteverdi was still in the service of the Duke of Mantua. His appointment in Venice dates from 1613.

Page 147: Schütz was never one of Monteverdi's pupils. He may have visited Monteverdi in Venice in 1629, when he was 44 years old, but there is no proof that he ever received any kind of tuition from the older master.

The example of "a Solo cantata of Schütz", quoted on the same page, is actually the beginning of "O süßer, o freundlicher, o gütiger Herr Jesu Christ . . .", No. 4 of the *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* of 1636. This is one of many cases in which the lack of an index of music examples is acutely felt.

Musiksoziologie. Eine Einführung in die Grundbegriffe mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Soziologie der Tonsysteme. By Kurt Blaukopf. (Verlag Willi Verkauf, Vienna.) Pp. 143. 1950.

"Sociology of Music" has recently developed into one of the most persistent hobbies among progressively minded musical pundits on the Continent. In 1948 E. H. Meyer (well known in this country as author of the volume *English Chamber Music*) was appointed professor of *Musiksoziologie* at the Humboldt-Universität of East Berlin and early this year a new music magazine was launched in the Russian sector under the title *Musik und Gesellschaft*, with Professor Meyer as one of its editors. The urge to investigate the intricate and often seemingly erratic inter-relationship between music and society has produced a number of books on folklore research as well as on *Musikpsychologie* and it may also have been chiefly responsible for the origin of Blaukopf's study which admittedly received decisive stimuli from Max Weber's paper of 1924, from Joseph Yasser's studies on the problem of Tonality and from E. H. Meyer's personal advice. In nine terse chapters the author draws an evolutionistic picture of the gradual development from primitive tonal systems to equal temperament, culminating in recent tendencies to overcome its natural limitations by virtue of Atonality, Twelve-tone technique, the Quarter-tone system and finally the still obscure term, *Klangfarbe* (tone colour). In his lucid commentary on the fetish character of our present-day tonality and on J. S. Bach's as well as Arnold Schönberg's "enharmonic trick" to circumvent its physical boundaries, the author comes very near to H. H. Dräger's recent explanation of the importance of the "mean tone system" in the music of the Renaissance and Baroque era, the peculiarities of which have been lost in the deliberate limitation of the system of equal temperament.* Blaukopf believes that the experimental endeavour of composers to widen the ambit of our tonal system (Scriabin, Schönberg, Haba, Seletzky, Ogolovetz) will be doomed to failure until a planned musical society can establish the economic basis for a technical and acoustic revolution of that kind. In his comment on earlier scales and tonal systems Blaukopf shows a commendable measure of historic insight, whereas he seems strongly dependent on Yasser's arguments when discussing problems of harmony and equal temperament. As a courageous first step to chart a vast new territory of musical research Blaukopf's study is welcome, as a textbook on the Sociology of Music, however, it falls short of expectations aroused by its sonorous title. A comprehensive bibliography, containing entries of considerable interest (Yasser, J. Sazonov, Kurella, Fickensher and others), suffers from the fact that the majority of books are listed without indication of date or place of publication. It remains to be seen whether Blaukopf will eventually succeed in propounding a positive regulated system of tonality to supplement his shrewd criticism of its present and past shortcomings.

H.F.R.

THE CANTOR

The Art of J. S. Bach. By A. E. F. Dickinson. Pp. 260. (Hinrichsen.) 1950. 12s. 6d.

This is an honest, scholarly and valuable book, written with copious and disarming acknowledgments to previous writers on Bach, furnished with a glossary, indices (including three of the cantatas, the third listing these works according to the Christian year with a note of each's message) and a catalogue of editions and facsimiles, the whole being based on the author's 1935 work on the subject. Its genial and earnest approach is transparent, and no reader will come away from it without learning something. A short chapter on

* Cf. H. H. Dräger, "Der Heutige Bach-Hörer und die gleichschwebende Temperatur" (published in *Bachprobleme*, Peters, Leipzig, 1950, page 52 ff.).

Bach the man, free from the sentimental anecdotalism that informs the work of the Grews in *The Master Musicians* series, leads to a consideration of the keyboard music, the organ works, and the orchestral and chamber compositions. The remaining 103 pages of text (followed by a resumptive *coda* on the Bach heritage) deal in four chapters with the choral music. There is hardly a single question that a student may ask himself about Bach's practice and progress as an artist that is not answered somewhere in this succinct yet comprehensive survey, and its *doctrinal* effect is to make a perfect Lutheran if not a perfect Bachian. Guarded, but not tendentious, the author steers a middle course between the "classical" objectivity of Spitta and the psychological and pictorial motif-hunting of Schweitzer, regarding Parry, it would seem, as the chief Lord of Appeal. He is keen on a *referendum* to the keyboard for the amateur, and thorough in his demonstration of how many movements have been used by Bach in other contexts. Indeed, no short survey of Bach that I have read gives so consistent an idea of a life devoted to hard work, much of it necessarily *ad hoc*. This treatment makes what is said on the B minor *Mass* particularly interesting, not least in relation to the author's book on Beethoven, which is, or should be, in most students' hands; for he indulges in no special pleading for the repetition of the *Gratias agimus* as the *Dona nobis pacem*; he will have no talk of "emotional pose" here, on the contrary, he says: "There the orthodox Protestant laid down his pen. . . . Bach pored no more over the Mass. *Dona nobis pacem* desired separate but not original treatment!" Although he is not silent on the difference between Beethoven's and Bach's approach to the Mass it does not seem to strike him that the emphasis in Beethoven is on Christ's pity, in Bach on His sublimity and His suffering, but he never lets his enthusiasm get the better of his common sense, nor does he set the Lutheran against the Roman Catholic mentality.

It is therefore with some reluctance that I mention the only point in this excellent handbook (from which I still hope to learn much) that seriously disquiets me. It concerns *The Art of Fugue*, which, in my comparative ignorance of the cantatas and lack of sympathy with the Dürerlike central figure of the *St. Matthew Passion*, I tend to regard as the profoundest of Bach's works. As many of us know, it is only in comparatively recent years that *The Art of Fugue* has been regarded as other than "paper music". When, in 1911, I think, O. H. Gotch arranged the fugues for string quartet and the four canons for violin and cello at the Oxford Ladies' Musical Society, the son of that David to whom Mendelssohn dedicated his violin Concerto, sadly shook his head and muttered, "It es not meant to be played". This may sound ridiculous to some who appreciate the modern orchestral version, but it is true, and I am reminded of it when I find Mr. Dickinson with his usual scrupulous honesty of mind writing as follows:

"The four canons are enigmas: easily written, they exhibit small musical interest apart from their skit on the main theme. One of them (in 2/2) appears to be a definitely humorous effort, the canonic effect being so delayed and slow-moving that its relation to the original soon becomes inaudible, and doubly grotesque in repetition. Are these canons witty parodies or, as Tovey half-suggests, preliminary sketches for an *Art of Canon* series? No one can say."

De gustibus! I can say only that, since I have been able to think musically, the first canon (to say nothing of the others) has struck me as the most poignant expression existing of spiritual loneliness in tones, with the possible exception of the first movement of the C sharp minor Quartet. How anybody with a musical education could ever conceive it as a skit or a parody completely baffles me. Those four canons are, for this critic, side chapels round the apse of the unfinished cathedral of Bach's most intimate contemplation. Still, he is grateful to Mr. Dickinson for insisting that *The Art of Fugue* is keyboard stuff and will go back to him time and again for readily accessible information on Bach's manner of work.

A Front Seat at the Opera. By George R. Marek. Pp. 256. (Harrap.) 1951. 10s. 6d.

This is a bedside and/or a week-end book for the opera-lover. The author, music critic of *Good Housekeeping* and programme-annotator for the Metropolitan Opera House, has assembled a series of fifty genially written "Globe turn-overs" (to use a journalistic phrase

of the past) on aspects of operas and their composers. He has quarried, but he has thought. He asks himself what happens between the acts of *Tristan* and *Rosenkavalier*, narrates famous *premieres*, troubles of and with librettists, why Rossini stopped writing operas (the answer is Meyerbeer), the legend that *Carmen* was a failure (disproved by press-cuttings) and the superstitions of famous singers. Mr. Marek is so much in love with his subject that one is unwilling to criticize him. His paragraph on Puccini's home at Torre del Lago in 1946 is moving.

A Career in Music. By Robert Elkin. Pp. 256. (William Earl.) 1950. 12s. 6d.

A collection of thirteen signed articles, each with photograph (including the introducer's), on the solo instrumentalist (H. Cohen), the solo singer (G. Baker), the composer (N. Demuth), the accompanist (G. Moore), the conductor (J. Harrison), the orchestral player (T. Russell), the music teacher (J. R. Tobin), organist and choirmaster (S. de B. Taylor), musical instrument manufacture (S. A. Hurren), music publishing (S. W. Straker), the music dealer (J. Rushworth), organization and administration (J. Denison). The names of the several authors, facsimiled at the end of each item, will tell you what to expect.

The Literature of the Piano. By Ernest Hutcheson. Pp. viii + 374 + xxxv. (Hutchinson.) 12s. 6d.

It seems natural, when appraising this book, written by a pupil of Carl Reinecke as "a guide for amateur and student", to turn first to lesser-known names and see what he has to say about them, *ex pede Herculem*, as it were. Of Clementi's sonatas, characterized as "exceedingly dry to modern taste", only the B flat one that Mozart echoed in the overture to *Zauberflöte* is mentioned. Not a word of the F sharp minor, the B minor (a favourite with Clara Schumann), the glorious C major (op. 34, no. 1), a true precursor of the *Waldstein*, or the E minor (the first of the "Caprices" dedicated to his wife). Of Dussek, "now little more than a historical figure", there is nothing to indicate that he was responsible for the *Élégie Harmonique*, to say nothing of *L'Invocation* and *Le Retour à Paris* (if Weber's sonatas are examined, these should be). Of Hummel, whose F sharp minor Sonata was pronounced by Schumann as alone enough to make him immortal, no word is said to hint that he is a romantic: more is said about Moscheles, one of whose pupils the author knew. If you set out to guide a student you should show him neglected gems, not merely repeat conventional text-book croakings. It is a question of taste and sensitivity, no doubt. I cannot believe, myself, that anybody should be allowed to guide the student of the piano who says that Weber's E minor Sonata is ruined by its first movement, who omits op. 54 in a selection of Beethoven's representative sonatas and who dismisses the *Diabelli* variations inaccurately in twenty lines ("At one place a theme from Mozart's *Figaro* is introduced. Of course there is a fugue") and a postscript to say that it may be of historical interest to note that it was once played at New York by a group of thirteen pianists and conductors alternating at two pianos. There is anecdote and triviality in plenty here, but guidance none. *Caveat emptor.* A student is better left alone than with a "popular" manual of this kind, ranging from Bach to Aaron Copland; and containing a supplementary list of American composers in Appendix C.

E. H. W. M.

Bizet. By D. C. Parker. Pp. 192. (Routledge & Kegan Paul.) 1951. 12s. 6d.

This is a revised edition of what was, at the time of its publication in 1926, the only book on Bizet in English. During the last twenty-five years, and particularly since the centenary in 1938, much additional information has become available on Bizet's life and still more on his music, based partly on the examination of his autograph manuscripts in the library of the Paris Conservatoire. Mr. Parker uses some but not all of the biographical material; he ignores the musical research. As a result, though he himself fills one or two small gaps, such as the date of the projected opera *Vercingétorix*, he omits much that is relevant to his theme and leaves an incomplete and sometimes erroneous

picture. Many examples could be given. The evidence that Bizet's third Rome *envoi* included an overture (*La Chasse d'Ossian*) does not depend on Octave Séré; it is mentioned in the Academy's report and other sources. *Ivan le Terrible* was performed in Germany in 1946, and far more is known about it (and about other unpublished works) than Mr. Parker indicates. Neither the first-night audience nor the Press was "cordial" to *Djamileh* (Mr. Parker has at least modified the "more than cordial" of his first edition). "Vesinet" (*passim*) should be "Le Vésinet". *Don Procopio* supplied more choral work to *La Jolie Fille de Perth* than to *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, and Mr. Parker says nothing of the remarkable changes in the borrowed Serenade. By quoting only the letters in which Bizet praised Gounod he gives an altogether false view of Bizet's opinion of that composer; nor does a single political reference in an early letter justify the statement that Bizet "hated the England he did not know". "Brigadier" is not the English equivalent of José's rank in *Carmen*. What Nietzsche detected in José's last cry was not "tragic humour" but tragic irony. Mr. Parker doubts the story that Bizet re-wrote *Carmen's habañera* in rehearsal on the ground that "as Tiersot wisely points out, if the piece composed for Galli-Marié were changed, the end of the first act must also have been changed; which, involving some revision, seems extremely unlikely". It may seem unlikely to Mr. Parker, but it is precisely what happened, as anyone can see who troubles to consult the autograph. And not only the facts, but the bars of music that Bizet originally wrote at the relevant point in the finale, have been published in this country. The bibliography has been brought partially up to date, the list of works not at all; even in 1926 this omitted many published works. Some of these are however mentioned in the text.

Mr. Parker is far from discriminating in the sources he does use. The misrepresentations of certain French writers about Bizet are notorious, yet anything seems to be admitted into evidence provided it was written by a Frenchman. Pougin's suspect article *La Légende de la chute de Carmen et la mort de Bizet* is trotted out once more, and so are the following statements, all demonstrably false in every material particular: "Gounod, Halévy and Marmontel [were] the only guides of the young pilgrim on the paths of Art" (Gauthier-Villars), "Esteemed highly, officially considered a master, Bizet therefore knew all through his life the most flattering attentions and had not to fight like the majority of composers" (Vuillermoz), "It may be said that during the whole course of his life, Bizet never once chose any subject he treated—not even *Carmen*" (Jean-Aubry).

Hence when he comes to criticize the music Mr. Parker is already handicapped. He is at his best in discussing the characters of *Carmen* and the opportunities they offer to singers. It is therefore strange to read his fulsome praise of Guiraud's recitatives. Technically Guiraud carried out a fairly easy task with the skill expected of an academic musician and a close colleague; artistically he made a sad mess of the opera and particularly of the characterization. Even more odd is Mr. Parker's suggestion that the reader may find an excess of enthusiasm in Marmontel's description of *Djamileh* as "a charming, dreamy, passionate work full of the oriental languor that Félicien David and Reyher have so happily caught in their delicious scores, *Lalla Roukh* and *La Statue*". Most critics today would convict Marmontel of damning with faint praise. But Mr. Parker still under-rates Bizet's work apart from *Carmen*, though less so than in his first edition. He seems preoccupied with the notion that *Carmen* was a sort of happy accident, and can still ask of Bizet "Is he, in reality, a one-work man?" He devotes at least half his book to this opera, including a long chapter on its history after Bizet's death. He disinters some worthwhile things among the English criticisms of the first London performance in 1878, including a remarkably penetrating notice in *The Daily Telegraph* and a preposterous one in *The Athenæum*, and a characteristic article (1905) by John F. Runciman enshrining the fact (recently rediscovered) that Bizet's father was originally a hairdresser from Rouen. But the space accorded to singers and anniversaries would have been better spent on the many interesting works, including *L'Arlésienne* (whose plot is summarized with a delicacy worthy of Dr. Bowdler), that receive scant attention. Nor is it easy to justify the many pages given to discussing such questions as whether the first production of *Carmen* (and Bizet's career as a whole) was a success or a failure. The facts are that the opera failed

at first, recovered just in time (perhaps for reasons extraneous to art), was then shelved for seven years and only restored (in a sadly adulterated form) after a world-wide success and a vigorous Press campaign; the key factor being apparently that neither the theatre director nor the librettists had the courage of their convictions.

Mr. Parker has greatly improved the style of his book by cutting out a great deal of repetitive and sententious matter and putting behind him the temptation to imaginative reconstruction. But his translations from the French are often awkward, if not inaccurate, as when he reports Bizet's widow as telling him "As for a journey to Spain, it has never been made" and "As for Spain, I truly believe that he (Bizet) has never been there". In his first edition the communications of Mme Bizet-Straus (then still alive) were veiled by some such periphrasis as "one well qualified to know". This disguise is now stripped away, and one or two further personal communications are added. Although they cannot be said to contribute much to the picture they are worth having. But Mr. Parker's great and permanent claim on the affection of all Bizet-lovers is that in 1933 he drew Weingartner's attention to the score of the delightful early Symphony in C. It is interesting to learn here that after the first performance Weingartner's opinion of it rose. Whereas he formerly found it "not very powerful, but nice and very accomplished in form and orchestration", he now described it as "a charming, wonderful work". W. D.

Science and Singing. By Ernest G. White. Pp. xiv + 186. (Dent.) 1950. 10s. 6d.

Sinus Tone Production. By Ernest G. White. Pp. xviii + 145. (Dent.) 1951. 10s. 6d.

When Mr. White's book *The Voice Beautiful* (now revised and retitled *Science and Singing*) was first published *The Daily Telegraph* said that it might be termed a musical bombshell.

Certainly the theories it contained offered much material for controversial discussion: the serious research and detailed study underlying his exposition merit the careful consideration which every conscientious teacher should devote to fresh ideas on their own particular subject, no matter how revolutionary they appear, for, even though such study may lead to rejection of an idea, controversial thought is in itself stimulating.

Mr. White makes very sweeping assertions in regard to the complete lack of real knowledge, or any scientific basis as a foundation to the production of the voice previous to his own research and method, which he expounds as the one solution to all and every problem of voice production, even claiming that it is a cure for many forms of ill health unconnected with the voice. Surely he overlooks the fact that the great masters of the so-called Golden Age of Song produced great singers although their knowledge of physiology was practically non-existent, yet their comprehension and treatment of vocal potentialities was unlimited. Then, taking the singers over a period of some 40-50 years, which included Caruso, Melba, Tetrassini, Destinn, Lilli and Lotte Lehmann, Leider, Hempel, Dux, Tauber, Scotti, to name but a few, would he have us believe that their beautiful singing sprang from the light of nature and was not based on real knowledge of how to handle their material, used in strenuous operatic rôles, often several performances a week throughout years? And that an occasional failure of the human mechanism due to physical fatigue and the ills of the flesh such as colds and consequent laryngitis would not have occurred had they based their work on the sinus method? If, as he states, the chords play no part in the production of tone, why did airmen in the recent war carry their laryngeal microphones on the throat to facilitate their speech connection with the ground? Obviously Mr. White sincerely believed in the theory he expounds, and spent his whole life endeavouring by patient research to prove it. But until the disciples of his method can produce a few really great singers as exponents it is doubtful whether it will claim wider adherence.

A voice, whether of an actor or singer requires a wide range of depth and colour to be truly beautiful. The older, accepted methods produced these within living memory. That the present dearth of great singers may be due to the lack of great teachers I would not venture to assert or deny. That it is entirely due to the lack of scientific knowledge or the failure to practise the sinus method I believe to be untrue.

Our century has suffered great upheavals and the loss of potential first-class material in all the arts and walks of life. Possibly too, economic reasons and the *tempo* of the modern age play their part. But every age throws up its outstanding figures. Perhaps the next fifty years may multiply its Flagstads? D. F. R.

The Music Masters. (Vol. II: After Beethoven to Wagner), edited by A. L. Bacharach. Pp. 400. (Cassell.) 1950. 17s. 6d.

This is a more comprehensive reprint of the well-known Pelican specials "Lives of the Great Composers", Vols. 2-3. It features once more the eminently readable and pertinent studies on Wagner and Brahms by Gerald Abraham and the late F. Bonavia. It adds, however, to the brief and sometimes elliptic studies on the chief musical Romantics a crop of new essays, devoted to the "lesser lights" of the nineteenth century, which might have been welcome had specialists been entrusted with the task of introducing these unfamiliar figures to the English reader. From Mr. Ralph W. Wood's five pages on Lortzing, very little may be learned about this "Mozart of the German Biedermeier", whose relation to Richard Wagner J. Krüger-Riebow has just clarified on the basis of hitherto unpublished letters, dating from 1848 (cf. *Musik & Gesellschaft*, I/1, 1951, Berlin). Even the inaccurate passing reference to Lortzing's unsuccessful operas such as *Caramo* (not "Caramor") and *Fischerstechen* (not "Fisherstechen") will hardly recompense the uninitiated student for the deplorable lack of information on operatic classics like *Czar und Zimmermann*, *Wildschütz* and *Waffenschmied* which have remained the backbone of the provincial German opera repertory up to the present day. Similarly unsatisfactory is Leslie Orrey's humdrum chapter on Spohr, which makes not the slightest attempt to emphasize the importance of this pioneer harmonist whose *Jessonda* is the nearest approach to the style of Wagner's *Tristan*. It is equally strange to find Otto Nicolai's principal operatic antagonist mentioned in John S. Weissmann's study as "his beloved Donizetti". R. W. Wood's brief chapters on Bruckner and Cornelius are specially uninformative on their complex relationship to the master of Bayreuth. A welcome exception to these quite inadequate, because mainly anecdotal attempts to cut composers' silhouettes by the dozen, is Dyneley Hussey's enlightening and musically valuable essay on Meyerbeer. On the other hand, Meyerstein's chapter on Hummel is a hotch-potch of disconnected anecdotes, interesting bibliographical "asides" and irrelevant detail. It contains misprints galore (as does the majority of these essays). It is also written in a curious, not to say, angular, style, as may be guessed from the following passage: "His post, probably through too much attention to secular music, fell in, in May, 1811. . ." Perhaps a more scrupulous editor than Mr. Bacharach would have insisted on more felicitous phrasing in this as in similar cases. A more conscientious editor might even have read the proofs more carefully and avoided silly misprints such as the date 1882 (the year of the first *Parsifal*) given for the first performance of Donizetti's *Chiara e Serafino*. He might have noticed that Flotow's Mecklenburg estate is spelt Güstrow (not Gustrow) and that Charles X's antidemocratic minister's name was Polignac (not Folignac). But an editor of so many scruples might even have chosen different contributors in some cases and might possibly have entrusted specialists to deal with remote backbenchers like Lortzing, Nicolai, Spohr *e tutti quanti*. He might even have insisted that his contributors should occasionally refer to their respective subject's musical exploits instead of letting them paddle in the shallows of biographical *fable convenue* most of the time.

Ornamentation in J. S. Bach's Organ Works. By Putnam Aldrich. Pp. 61. (Coleman-Ross Company Inc., New York.) 1950. \$2.00.

This is one of the very few contributions from the Anglo-American hemisphere dealing with problems of Bach-interpretation, at a time when Germany is perpetually turning out such books and pamphlets under the stimulus of the recent bicentenary celebrations. Mr. Aldrich's treatise is all the more welcome as it tackles one of the most baffling and neglected aspects of Bach's music: the interpretation of his ornaments. Eighteen years ago Ludwig Landshoff proved that Bach's ornamentation, of which a great part was embodied in fully "written out" notation, is an integral element of his style. (Cf. his

valuable *Revisionsbericht zur Urtextausgabe von J. S. Bachs Inventionen und Sinfonien*, C. F. Peters, Leipzig, 1933.) Mr. Aldrich subjects the main ornamental types to a thorough analysis, fortified by a comprehensive knowledge of current literature on this subject. His investigation is based on a clear understanding of modern editorial duties, expressed in a paragraph of singular adroitness:

"... It followed that the autograph score is *not* an authentic record of how the composer or anyone else performed the piece. The method of editorial research developed by nineteenth century musicology consists chiefly in tracking down autograph manuscripts and first editions and preparing an 'Urtext' that contains only the notes and signs actually set down by the composer. . . Such a method is obviously quite useless from the performers' point of view, in a situation wherein a 'corrupt' score (with additions and alterations in handwritings other than the composer's) may be more authoritative than a 'pure' one, and no score can be completely authoritative. . . ."

Specially valuable is the solution offered on p. 49 for the enigmatic "little hooks" (*appoggiaturas* from above), figuring in the table of ornaments in J. S. Bach's *Clavierbüchlein vor Wilhelm Friedemann Bach* (1720) and playing such an important part in the Chorale Prelude "Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr" (Peters, VI/9):



Very interesting and plausible also is Mr. Aldrich's interpretation of the cadential 4/6 chord as "a double *appoggiatura*" which above a dominant bass "must be treated as dissonant intervals" (*ibid.*, p. 21). The author's explanations, strengthened by authoritative, yet neglected sources such as Wanda Landowska's paper "Bach und die französische Klaviermusik" (*Bach Jahrbuch*, 1910) are able to clear up many complex passages in Bach's keyboard music whether reliant on the abbreviating method of Couperin's school or based on Bach's own growing predilection for written out ornaments, for which latter tendency he was so severely taken to task by the carping Scheibe. The booklet would be easier to use if the author had uniformly referred to one current Bach-edition only, instead of alternating between Peters and Schirmer. Some misleading *Errata* should be corrected forthwith: Fascimile opposite p. 1: the date of the *Clavierbüchlein vor Wilhelm Friedemann* is 1720 (not 1770). Chambonnières published his *Pièces de clavessin* in 1670 (not in 1607). This useful little treatise, written by a real expert, should be in the hands of every serious minded Bach-performer.

Catalogue of Copyright Entries. III Series. Volume 4, Part 5A, No. 1. Pp. 425. (Published Music, January-June, 1950.) Copyright Office, The Library of Congress, Washington, U.S.A.

"In a "press release" the Library of Congress draws due attention to the fact that "the published music section of the Catalog is now the most adequately indexed . . . bibliography of current music in the world to-day". The English reader will have no quarrel with that bold assertion if and when he further realizes that "the 3,000 imported compositions copyrighted in the U.S. during the first half of 1950 represent 45 per cent. of the total number copyrighted". The information offered by this magnificent compilation is comprehensive and specially important in its insistence on exact dates of publication. A list of abbreviations deals efficiently with the exact amount of copyright claims, distinguishing between editor, arranger and publisher in the most ingenious fashion. Every entry reproduces the full title. This compilation is indispensable for anyone who has to keep abreast in *rebus musicae*, especially if he approaches published music from a legal aspect.

H. F. R.

Reviews of Music

A MIXED BAG

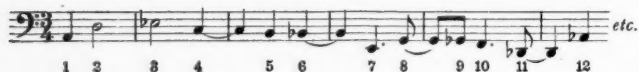
- Ernest Bloch: *Scherzo Fantastique* for piano and orchestra. Full score. (Schirmer.) 1950. 14s. 4d. Arrangement for two pianos (by the composer). (Chappell.) 1950.
- William Schuman: *Judith*, choreographic poem for orchestra. Full score. (Schirmer.) 1950. 18s.
- John Ireland: *Overture, Satyricon*. Miniature score. (J. Williams.) 1949. 6s.
- Gerald Finzi: *Nocturne*. Full score. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 1950. 15s.
- Elisabeth Lutyens: Six chamber Concertos, Op. 8. Nos. 3 and 4, pocket scores. (Chester.) 1947 and 1951.
- Humphrey Searle: *Passacaglietta*, Op. 16, for string quartet. Full score and parts. (Lengnick.) 1950. 4s.
- Arthur Oldham: *Divertimento* for string orchestra. Full score. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 1950. 30s.
- R. O. Morris: Concerto piccolo for 2 violins and string orchestra. Full score. (O.U.P.) 1950. 12s. 6d.

New orchestral music, coming from "God's own country" across the big water, seems as uniformly conspicuous for its high standard of technical efficiency as for the low temperature of its artistic inspiration. That holds good for old campaigners of central-European descent like Ernest Bloch as well as for typical products of "young America" such as William Schuman. The former's *Scherzo Fantastique*, completed in December, 1948, is sadly lacking in all those peculiar qualities of atmosphere and timbre for which the composer of *Schelomo* and the *viola Suite* is justly famous. It is no more than a piece of competently designed *concertante* music with the piano indulging in the usual grotesque *clichés* expected of it since the days of Liszt's *Malédiction*, and occasionally relapsing into the more natural attitudes of Bloch's traditional lyrical rhapsodizing. Except for its final section, carried out in the composer's successful "ritual" manner, nothing in this rather grim and humourless composition suggests its derivation from one of the most distinguished Jewish musicians of this age. It is as slick and smug as any other piece of orchestral manufacture turned out between Nebraska and Ellis Island. William Schuman's choreographic poem is based on a very extensive programme note (culled from the scriptures). It certainly provides an effective sonorous backcloth to some ambitious dancing, but as a piece of symphonic design it is too self-assured and thematically too little distinguished to capture the imagination of the more sophisticated listener. With a sigh of relief one turns from these high-powered uniformities to the honest-to-goodness garrulity of a native veteran, left over from the halcyon days of Elgar and Delius.

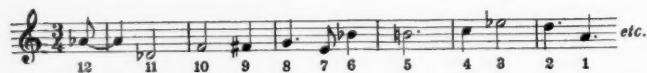
John Ireland's *Satyricon Overture* is cast in impeccable sonata-form, making the most of a single Beethovenian figure, a-c sharp-a, which serves admirably as a pattern for an ingenious tissue of thematic cross-references. A pity that the high spirits of the beginning give way so soon to the post-Elgarian musings of the romantic second subject. The scoring with the percussive highlights of whip and glockenspiel is as imaginative as the printing of this, the first of a new series of J. Williams' pocket scores, is pleasant to the eye. How much more zest for life exudes from the septuagenarian Ireland's *Petronian Fantasy* than from the scarcely fifty years old Gerald Finzi, whose 9-minute *Nocturne* asks for a *Tristan* orchestra to express "the sober sadness of New Year's eve" (according to a programme note supplied by the composer himself). With a somewhat censorious tone Finzi informs us further, that "here are no merry-makings and such like" to be looked for. This is surely in the line of a modest understatement. The music is gloomy,

despondent, frustrated and Pfitzner-like to an unpleasant extreme, hardly suggestive of a "Happy New Year" and much more like a lamentable retrospect of *illusions perdues*.

Economic considerations as well as principles of style are jointly responsible for an apparently growing predilection for smaller instrumental combinations. Miss Lutyens' comprehensive Opus 8 provides orchestral variants of a widely contrasting character. After the Schönbergian "Kammersymphonie"-style of Nos. 1 and 2 of this set, Nos. 3 and 4 revert more to the type of the late Romantic solo concerto. No. 3, for bassoon, strings and percussion, is obviously influenced by the aphoristic technique of Schönberg's *Fünf Orchesterstücke*, Op. 16. Chordal sequels of fourths (cue 1) are reminiscent of the Viennese master, as is much of the melodic flavour of the bassoon passages which would sound quite post-Romantic and more pleasing to the ear if played on a solo cello. No. 4 for horn and chamber orchestra reminds one frequently of Franz Schreker's sultry harmonies and seems even more romantic in its elementary substance, despite the dodecaphonic trappings of its principal themes. Both works abound in imaginative orchestral passages, whetting the listener's appetite for the ultimate surprises of Nos. 5 and 6 of this unusual set. Compared with Humphrey Searle's succinct *Passacaglietta* for string quartet (based on an old *In Nomine*) Miss Lutyens' attempts at twelve-note technique strike one as mildly amateurish. Here is complete mastery achieved within the narrow limits of 63 bars. The remarkable tone row:



with its possibilities for inversion, cancrizans treatment, etc.:



is deftly utilized for a piece of highly effective string music. The minute composition was written for Schönberg's 75th birthday. It is a veritable triumph of innate musicality over intractable compositional processes.

Arthur Oldham's *Divertimento* as well as R. O. Morris' Concerto piccolo faithfully reflect the atmosphere of rural music schools which engendered so much delightful, and unassumingly masterly music for zealous amateurs from the pens of Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst. Morris' Concerto—Holstian in its austerity of harmonies—contains some excellent part writing and is replete with imaginative counterpoint, as befits the author of many scholarly textbooks on the elementary problems of composition. Obviously Bach's Double Concerto for two violins and strings in D minor has served as a model of style. But little of Bach's harmonic resourcefulness and vitality prevails in the angularities of Morris' slightly artificial idiom. This Concerto piccolo is even better suited to the limitations of a school orchestra than Arthur Oldham's more ambitiously scored *Divertimento* with its many divisions, its *tutti-ripieno* technique and peculiar *pizzicato* effects. Oldham—belonging to the circle of Benjamin Britten—shows the overpowering influence of his idol, especially in the fourth movement—a not unpleasing imitation of the style of Britten's *Les Illuminations*. Both works are competent without slickness, and imaginative as well as rewarding in the handling of massed string tone, notorious for its limitations of harmony and tone colour. They are both warmly recommended to school orchestras, weary of rehearsing Warlock's *Capriol* suite and desirous to make positive contact with modern musical idioms.

H. F. R.

PIANO MUSIC

- William Alwyn: *Sonata alla Toccata*. (Lengnick.) 1951. 3s. 6d.
 Norman Anderson: *Three Diversions on Scotch Tunes*. (Augener.) 1951. 3s.
 Lennox Berkeley: *Three Mazurkas (Hommage à Chopin)*. (Chester.) 1951. 3s. 6d.
 Kathleen Richards: *Music for piano*. Op. 22. (Augener.) 1951. 3s. 6d.
 Joy Spoczynska: *Toccata in B flat*. Op. 29. (British and Continental Music Agencies.) 1951. 2s. 6d.
 Constant Lambert: *Trois Pièces Nègres pour les Touches Blanches*. (Oxford University Press.) 1950. 6s.
 Igor Stravinsky: "Madrid", from *Four Studies for Orchestra*. Transcription for two pianos by Soulima Stravinsky. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 1951.

Ever since the pianoforte emerged as the victorious rival of the penned keyboard instruments, its possibilities exercised a considerable attraction to composers though its essential character and distinctive instrumental resources were largely misunderstood until recently. On the whole, the pianistic idiom of the nineteenth century was based on a deception: Liszt's ornamental cascades and Chopin's melismatic passages are compromises—though successful ones—of the sound-producing potential of the instrument and the guiding musical ideal of the period, *i.e.* melodic expression. Debussy, whose piano-writing is not only an important facet of his individual style but also the most significant and decided advance in the development of pianistic idiom, having realized that the characteristic *timbre* of the piano was conditioned by its particular method of sound-production, enlarged the instrument's range of expression by exploiting the implied colouristic resources. But it was Bartók who faced the inescapable issue squarely: the piano is fundamentally a percussion instrument. Recognition of this fact transformed his own style of piano-writing and had a pronounced effect on contemporary music in general. The extent to which his teaching has been digested, and his leadership followed or further developed is therefore of considerable importance to the subsequent history of piano style.

To arrive at an assessment of practical value in surveying new piano music, then, the observer is obliged first to ask himself whether the work in question displays any inventiveness and advance in the exploitation of specifically pianistic resources, whether the composer shows evidence of being aware of the intrinsic possibilities offered by the instrument, before coming to consider the value of the purely musical content and the creative processes involved.

Writing for piano-duet and for two pianos have, of course, their special problems. To regard the combination merely as an additional source of sound-volume would not deserve serious consideration. Its value lies rather in the opportunity of contrasting different textures, in exploiting the colouristic values of opposed registers and of various manners of playing, in combining these devices, to mention a few of the possibilities. Here again, it was Bartók who opened up new avenues in his *Sonata* for two pianos and percussion.

The pianistic writing of Mr. Alwyn shows his awareness of the new conceptions regarding the instrument's resources; on the other hand he is conservative enough not to sacrifice established conventions purposelessly. In his three-movement *Sonata alla Toccata* the practical compromise of jazz technique had obviously taken a hold on his imagination, though we would have welcomed a more consistent assimilation of its devices instead of his unquestioned acceptance of its mannered figuration *formulae* and stereotyped *ostinati*. Nevertheless the texture is unencumbered almost throughout, mainly because of the effective use of *staccato* and *martellato* playing, of percussive discords, and of cleverly contrived although nowhere striking passage work.

The work shows his gift for inventing alert and pungent musical ideas which are fundamentally quite simple, yet crisp, always of decided rhythmic profile if not consistently original. The opening thought of the slow middle movement is of a more sustained nature. On the other hand we find the extensive passage in the last movement, subsequently apotheosized in the *coda*, antipathetic: this is, to speak in terms of music folklorists, an urbanized variant of a familiar Stravinsky tune, and quite unnecessarily bombastic, as these derivative ideas so often are. His flirtation with jazz is again

apparent in the rhythmic patterns; but while shifted metric accents employed now and again often impart a touch of piquancy to the discourse, their exact sequential repetitions or other mechanical multiplications are bound to become dull. Nor do we believe that Mr. Alwyn's harmonic treatment is entirely free from objectionable features: passages of satisfyingly purposeful chordal organization and relatively advanced grammar occur side by side with harmonic mannerisms which were eschewed by the more discerning even of the early nineteenth century composers. In addition there are some less immediately perceptible, though none the less disturbing stylistic inconsistencies hidden beneath a deceptive fluency of speech: the deficiency of organic growth leaves the promise of the ideas often unfulfilled; we miss logical relevance in certain of the succeeding sentences.

The sustained lyricism of the slow movement, however, would silence dissension. The harmonic scheme of the seemingly unpretentious opening sentence reveals a subtly organized rotation around an immutable F whose suggestiveness would compensate for the slight conventionality of its cadence. The character of this idea excludes any other formal solution than a set of variations, which it actually is.

The *Three Diversions* of Mr. Anderson, written in an unassuming style, conceal a good deal of sensitiveness for instrumental values under their apparent simplicity. In the quick pieces of the set the *legato*—particularly well suited to the unrestrained flow of Scots dance tunes—is opposed to the *staccato* of the accompaniment; whereas in the slow middle piece the tenderly lyrical melody is matched to the suave arabesques of decorative counterpoint into which the basic harmony is resolved. Their clean workmanship is commendable, and it speaks for Mr. Anderson's taste that he avoids the pretentiously elaborate treatment no less than the condescending sham *naïveté*, the twin bugbears that mar so many folkmusic adaptations. Since crossing of hands, combined with wide skips, occurs quite frequently, and discerning attention must be given to pedalling, the performer is assumed to possess a good measure of technical proficiency.

The dedication of Mr. Berkeley's *Three Mazurkas* to the memory of Chopin apparently implies a certain limitation in style and technique. The pianistic writing here is of the same order as in Chopin's identical pieces, and the musical ideas themselves are also largely of the same character. We cannot, however, help feeling a certain forcedness in the first and third pieces, occasioned by the unnecessarily *recherché* harmonic setting no less than by the conventional melodic fragments whose tautological repetitions would not compensate for the lack of a sustained melodic growth. On the other hand the second piece is more balanced in execution and perfectly genuine in feeling. Here Mr. Berkeley appears to have assimilated successfully the essential elements which characterize the music of mazurka, and to have penetrated beyond its superficialities; hence the spontaneity and sincerity of his utterance. The happy inspiration of the Lydian fourth appearing here as an organic melodic factor as well as other modal turns impart a characteristic flavour to the piece, and the middle section shows Mr. Berkeley's power of appropriate melodic invention. In addition, the simple tonal balance of its design is incomparably more satisfying than that of the other two pieces.

Miss Richards' disarming *Music for piano*, containing five picturesque *genre* pieces, reveals a discerning taste for traditional values in regard to both the technical possibilities of the instrument and the quality of musical inspiration. Though her harmonic thinking avoids any tonal adventures, an unexpected turn or an unorthodox progression would suddenly reveal a delightfully uninhibited outlook and lend an extraordinary freshness to the work. Her fine musicianship is also manifested in her ability to turn to good account the colouristic and dynamic values of passage-work, *legato* and *staccato* playing, and pedalling, which, in addition to the transparent texture and exceptionally clear formal proportions, make these pieces eminently suitable to the advanced syllabus of piano classes.

Examining Madame Spoczynska's *Toccata*, we confess a certain embarrassment: although the work bears opus number 29, implying a quantitatively not inconsiderable creative activity, we feel that it could still have remained in her MS book among other undoubtedly numerous and otherwise excellent style-exercises.

Mr. Lambert's admirable work for piano duet displays all the distinguishing qualities of this highly gifted musician: his attachment to polished craftsmanship, his Gallic temperament, and his keen sense of humour. The title is puzzling at first: a paradoxical word-play is suspected, but a glance in the music quickly informs us that "pièces nègres" refer to the prevailing jazz idiom, while "touches blanches" should be taken literally, *viz.* only the white keys of the piano are resorted to. The three pieces are entertaining music in the purest and noblest sense of the word. The "nègre" idiom is represented first and foremost in the rhythmic vigour of the music in which jazzy syncopation plays an important part, although the more subtle expedients of metric extension and contraction of thematic units are also frequent. The harmonic climate is that of Gallic skies: mildly percussive agglomerate chords, unresolved suspensions, and similar devices which, by now common properties of popular dance music, are used here with a precise stylistic purpose and sophisticated arrangement. The melodic invention is wholly delightful; sometimes touching the commonplace, but if so, the intent of persiflage is fairly obvious. There is a thematic relationship between the first and last movements, and the slightly sentimental note of the middle movement counterbalances their boisterous spirit. The various registers of the instrument and techniques of playing are effectively contrasted; the parts themselves are not unduly exacting. A very valuable addition to the piano-duet literature.

Since we assume that the purely musical content of Stravinsky's "Madrid" was assessed when the orchestral version was first published some twenty years ago, its detailed analysis need not be undertaken again, and we confine our remarks to the "instrumentation" of this new version for two pianos by Soulima Stravinsky, the composer's son. The problems arising from the transcription will appear to be even more interesting if it is remembered that the original version of the work, *Étude pour Pianola*, was likewise a keyboard piece.

The transcription requires pianists of considerable technical attainments, including a developed chordal *martellato* touch. As a rule the homogeneous instrumental groups of the orchestral version remain so in the transcription, *viz.* strings, brass, *etc.*, are each divided between either player as groups. Such is the case in the passage preparing and accompanying the principal subject which begins two bars before Fig. 2 in the miniature score* where the parts of the clarinets are allotted to one pianist in the transcription, who is thus enabled to give his undistracted attention to the subordinate function and sustained character of the passage.

Concern with linear purity, predetermined by the conspicuous stylistic features of the orchestral version, sometimes prompted the transcriber to provide single-hand passages: this is the case where a line would require conspicuous emphasis, as at the opening trumpet fanfare; or again to discard the orchestral octave doublings and concentrate the exposition of an idea in a melodic finger-passage: see the presentation of the main idea, Fig. 2 *et seq.* in the miniature score. Deviations from strict note-to-note transcription of the orchestral text are rare: they occur at the pianistic transformation of the oboe theme, converting its step-wise progression into a figure with an octave skip; and at the clarinet-passage—third bar after Fig. 13—to which an "e" is added in the transcription to facilitate its fingering. Note that first piano, penultimate bar, third beat, fifth demisemiquaver should be E sharp.

J. S. W.

MODERN PROFILES, I: EDMUND RUBBRA

Edmund Rubbra. *Four Mediaeval Latin Lyrics* for baritone and string orchestra, Op. 32. Full score. (Lengnick.)

Five Spenser Sonnets for tenor and string orchestra, Op. 42. Full score. (Lengnick.)

Missa in Honorem Sancti Dominici, Op. 66. Full score. (Lengnick.)

Rubbra—now in his fifty-first year—has lately achieved artistic maturity. Undoubtedly he is among the chosen few contemporary composers who have found a personal

* Cf. Stravinsky, Igor: *Quatre Études pour Orchestre*; Hawkes Pocket Scores No. 631; Boosey & Hawkes, London. 1947.

idiom and are able to use it with restraint and eloquence. In Rubbra's case it is an idiom of noble austerity, of great polyphonic skill, characterized by a deliberate neglect of purely harmonic effects in the romantic tradition. It is a musical language of seraphic dignity, inspired by mediaeval concepts of artistic truth and beauty, inclined to worship and to celebrate rather than to fight for new paths. The methods of composition which lately have guided the symphonist are made to serve the lyricist as well in his recent publications. Rubbra's *Mediaeval Latin Lyrics* are as remote from the conception of modern song as a Schubert *Lied* is from a Burgundian rondel. In his Opus 32 Rubbra selects three latin poems, belonging to the famous Benediktbeuern MS of *Carmina Burana* and a Planctus by Abelard, and he succeeds in adding to them appropriate melodies full of modal flavour and hidden passion. A nine-part string orchestra accompanies the singer in the style of a mediaeval motet, weaving a fascinating tapestry of sound round the gregorian chant of the baritone. Rubbra's apparent predilection for Goliard poetry and song is not an isolated case. Carl Orff (whose primitive plays with music are having quite a vogue in post-Hitlerian Germany just now) conceived his *Carmina Burana* in 1935 with remarkable technical resourcefulness as a dramatic oratorio for soli, chorus and orchestra. For those to whom the latin tongue may prove a stumbling block, Rubbra has wisely added a singable English translation. The full score is very pleasing and well spaced out, but the misprints on the title page are really shocking. It is high time that Lengnick's engaged a reliable proof reader for their new productions. The scores of Wellesz and Mellers which they issued recently are also studded with printer's errors of the most annoying kind.

The *Five Spenser Sonnets* are based on similar technical premises with one significant difference, however, in the treatment of the polyphonic string orchestra. In the case of the romantic Renaissance poet harmonized effects are actually aimed at, resulting in chromatic passages of strange beauty, especially in Sonnets VI and XLIII. The masterly polyphonic structure in the concluding Sonnet LXVIII with its exultant final climax in D major eloquently testifies to the composer's present stature.

Within the self imposed limits of a four-part *cappella* setting, perfectly serviceable for liturgic purposes, the St. Dominic's Mass is a masterpiece. It creates stupendous "purple patches" of harmony by ingeniously dividing the chorus into up to 7 parts (as in the passage "*Et in spiritum sanctum. . .*"). It conforms to strict Roman rite by commencing the *Credo* with the plainchant intonation of the officiating priest. It achieves strange but convincing modulations, of almost Bruckner-like fervour in the *Benedictus*, and it succeeds—despite its modal basis—in establishing a variety of keys, sometimes linked by means of enharmonic change of remarkable dexterity. The little work should be taken up by every choral society specialising in a *cappella* singing on a larger scale and conversant with the vocal problems of "Palestrina style".

H. F. R.

Edmund Rubbra. Trio for piano, violin and cello, Op. 68. (Lengnick.) 8s.

Ever since the first performance of this work at the Cheltenham Festival of 1950, I have been involved in serious arguments with some colleagues who, not without a modicum of justice, find basic aesthetic faults in this Trio. Since their reactions are likely to be shared by many listeners, it might be best to review this work in the form of an essay in Rubbrian apologetics.

(a) The obvious *mystical* quality of this Trio (mentioned, amongst others, by the critic of *The Times*) and also of the cello Sonata, is considered specious in the absence of a highly personal idiom and a completely integrated form. Against this, I should assert that it is easy for a musical rationalist to disregard the completely sublimated mysticism of Bach and Beethoven, by confining his understanding to the intra-musical content of these masters. On the other hand, there are the mystical composers proper, such as Bruckner, Franck, André Caplet, and Rubbra, whose forms remain open, or even elliptic, through the very urgency of their mystical message. Our rationalist may take his choice between them, prompted by his musical upbringing into a liking of Bruckner and a dislike of Franck, or vice-versa; but he must not blame the mysticism of, for instance, Rubbra

for the formal shortcomings of his works. In other words, granted that there is a genuine mystical experience behind the first, and formally weakest, movement of the Trio (a Chorale-fantasia, as it were) then its length, its uneventful modulations, its austere string-unisons must be forgiven, for these "faults" are part and parcel of Rubbra's ascetic message, and could not be amended. Indeed, the *reductio ad absurdum* of our rationalist's argument is that short of scrapping the whole movement nothing could be done about it.

(b) Objections are made to the patent anachronisms of Rubbra's idiom (e.g. the quasi-eighteenth century Italian sequences in the "Episodio Scherzando", the Brahmsian cross-rhythms and Regerian organ-texture of the "Tema" and "Meditazione"). But the composer with a mystical message has always made use of undisguised anachronistic formulae (see Bruckner's plain I-IV-V-I cadences) which correspond to the amount of musically unsublimated *libido* encountered in such a composer. It is the intra-musically conservative composer like Brahms who carefully digests and "modernizes" his historical sources. Still, the main question with regard to musical atavism (as distinct from conservatism) remains: "is it a calculated effect, or is it the only solution in a given context?" The answer to this being dependent on personal taste and empathy with a composer's creative processes, I can only affirm that, while finding the anachronisms of *Gerontius* fabricated and therefore sanctimonious, I believe those of Rubbra to be ingenuous and therefore musically unobjectionable.

(c) Desmond Shawe-Taylor in *The New Statesman*, 15th July, 1950, speaking of Rubbra's fifth Symphony: "The prevailing texture is that of porridge—compounded, no doubt, of the finest and wholesomest wholemeal, but porridge none the less". In the same way, it is said that Rubbra's Trio is no trio, but an uneasy accommodation of scholastically conceived music to an existing combination of instruments. Now, whenever a composition does not "come off" in the medium the composer has provided, there can be three possible reasons: either there is a better medium available which the composer failed to see, or the music is so abstract that a sensually satisfying presentation is beside the point (e.g. the *Art of Fugue*, written in open score), or, finally, the music, though conceived instrumentally, happens not to fit any existing combination of instruments. This last possibility is usually not admitted by those who hold that only those ideas are healthy which present themselves to the composer clothed in one of the existing instrumental colours. But if music is to be greater than acoustics, this case must be possible. While the Rubbra Trio is definitely not of the "open score" class of music, its ideas are suited best to some string-and-piano medium. A piano-quartet would be too big, a piano-violin sonata too small a medium; the nearest approach is indeed the piano-trio. If the music is still felt to fall between the stools of existing combinations, that is a pity; but I would rather put up with its dowdy sound than have Rubbra suppress his ideas for fear of mere instrumental failure.

All in all, this Trio is not one of Rubbra's best works. But it is better than might appear at first. P. H.

MODERN PROFILES, II: FRANZ REIZENSTEIN

Franz Reizenstein. Sonata in B for pianoforte. (Lengnick.)
 Sonata in G sharp for violin and piano. (Lengnick.)
 Sonata in A for violoncello and piano. (Lengnick.)

As far as technical equipment goes, Franz Reizenstein certainly occupies a front-line position among contemporary British composers. His music is superbly com-posed, i.e. put together, and can boast of immaculate part writing, resourceful counterpoint, logical spinning out of germinal ideas and admirable craftsmanship in general. What is more, his music is superbly written for its various media. Reizenstein's piano parts are pure joy to play and to listen to. Here at last seems a composer capable of producing highly enjoyable and technically interesting chamber music as a result of his thorough training in Hindemith's rigorous school. In the past the overpowering figure of his mentor had sometimes cast a deepening shadow over the pages of his earlier creative

efforts. It obviously became a life-and-death problem for Reizenstein to integrate this domineering influence, just as he was about successfully to integrate the Anglo-Saxon world into the orbit of his own continental musicianship. Has he succeeded in this twofold effort? I am afraid the three ambitiously planned works of the three last years give a negative reply. In fact, they rather indict their creator as an unrestrained eclectic, striking out frantically into opposite directions. Such a situation is rather dangerous for a composer now in his fortieth year, and all will depend on his ability to extricate himself out of the slough of artistic promiscuity into which he has temporarily fallen.

The piano Sonata (1948), dedicated to William Walton, begins with Chopin's barcarolle rhythm in the left hand and a rhapsodizing subject in the right, to which Sibelius and Walton have both stood godfather. But once the *Allegro vivace* is reached, we are back to Hindemith's *Ludus tonalis* which is also used as a pattern of moods and contrapuntal devices for the third movement. (From a purely pianistic point of view Reizenstein's music is superior in layout to Hindemith's often dry and harsh juxtapositions.) The slow middle movement however, while managing to rid itself of Walton and Hindemith obsessions, seems to fall a victim to Lennox Berkeley's *Prelude No. 4* (1948). It is quite possible that both Berkeley and Reizenstein composed their respective works independently, presumably under the joint subconscious influence of Britten's *Illuminations*. Anyhow, the melodic style of this middle movement seems irreconcilably opposed to the musical atmosphere of the other movements. Viewed separately, it is a piece of exuberant and superbly spaced piano writing. What a pity that its stylistic models (Britten and Berkeley for its first 4 bars; Debussy for bars 8 ff., page 26, and for bars 3 ff., page 28; Busoni's *Sonatina* (1910) for the whole *coda*, page 31) shimmer so clearly through its tenuous fabric.

Even worse is the case of the earlier violin Sonata in G sharp, of which the first bar begins all too undisguisedly with the germinal motif and principal false relation of Walton's viola Concerto. Such allusions seem to me only permissible if they are in the nature of direct quotations (as in the case of Mátyás Seiber's Schönberg quotations in *Ulysses*). Again a first movement of halcyon beauty and feverish loveliness—deeply indebted to Walton's melodic patterns—is clearly contradicted by a scherzo in Hindemith's most *gauche* manner. The finale, beginning with impressionistic colour mixtures, falls eventually back to Hindemith's most forbidding type of motoric pattern-weaving. The position of distinguished eclectics, such as Walton himself, seems in a way compromised by the indiscriminate eclecticism of adepts like Reizenstein, who do their best to discredit musical eclecticism by their appalling lack of selective instinct.

The situation remains intrinsically unaltered in the Sonata for violoncello and piano (1949), except for the fact that Hindemith appears here in the august company of Max Reger as stylistic model and that the tedious play with barren parallels of fourths and fifths *à la* Hucbald (cf. 3rd movement, page 44 ff.) seems unworthy of an artist of Reizenstein's contrapuntal training and technical ingenuity. This device is now fast becoming as hoary as the chord of the augmented ninth from *Tristan*.

The structural and modulatory implications of sonata-form are handled in all three works with commendable skill and perspicacity. If these sonatas had succeeded in finding a personal idiom instead of indiscriminately reflecting contradictory stylistic models, they could be hailed as a triumph in the struggle of contemporary composers to revive the principles of classical composition. Everything will depend for Reizenstein on an early acquisition of such a personal language. And no one will acknowledge that fact with more pleasure and sincere relief than the undersigned.

MODERN PROFILES, III: BERNARD STEVENS

Bernard Stevens. *Ricercar* for string orchestra. (Lengnick.)
Sinfonietta for string orchestra. (Lengnick.)
Elogue for small orchestra. (Lengnick.)

These new works are conceived on a much higher plane of artistic discipline than the earlier Sonata for violin and piano. Yet, even when confronted with these more mature

efforts the reviewer sticks to his original conviction: that Mr. Stevens' music is still largely *in statu pupillari* and not yet deserving of publication. Both *Ricercar* and *Sinfonietta* can certainly pass as musical prentice work of a very good standard, but not more. The *Ricercar* is a combination of three different *fugati*, but its three subjects are in no way superior to the academic subjects which could be picked out at random from Gédalge's classical *Traité de la Fugue* (1901). The *Sinfonietta* tries to cope with sonata-form in a mildly neo-classical manner. What *can* be done in that direction has been amply shown by Prokofiev in his *Symphonie classique*.

The musty romanticism of Stevens' lyrical episodes (e.g. the 2nd movement) does much to spoil the good impression of his sonata exposition (1st movement) and his lively *fugati* in the 3rd movement. That Stevens—despite his neo-classical trappings—is at heart an inveterate Romantic of Elgar's brand is fully borne out by the *Eclogue* for small orchestra conceived in the pleasantly rhapsodic manner of Elgar's *Serenade* for strings. This is an unpretentious piece of pleasing *Stimmungsmusik* for amateur orchestras, containing some effective passages for solo woodwinds. If it were the effort of a beginner of twenty, the present reviewer would not hesitate to predict him a bright future within certain limits. But as a product of the maturing artist in his early thirties it does not inspire him with quite the same confidence.

H. F. R.

Benjamin Frankel. *May Day, A Panorama*, Op. 22. Prelude for orchestra. (Augener.) 5s. 6d.

To all intents this was conceived as a major work, but knowing some of Frankel's major works, I cannot consider this one of them. The near-programmatic seriousness of Frankel's present approach to composition, so admirably suited to some of his tragic or bellicose music, clashes here with the avowedly festive character of this piece: for how is a musical moralist to let himself go? How can a man of Frankel's stamp write light music? Can he trust the orchestra—or the milling crowds of May Day, for that matter—to behave if left to their own devices, or is it his duty to control even their merriment? Frankel tries both, but is successful only in the second case, albeit at the expense of his programme. For the passage marked *Ironico* (letter I) owes its musical success to the fact that it persiflages one of the trite themes that are "let loose" in the exposition. Likewise, the development proper (letters T–X—this "panorama" is in quasi-ternary form) is good, solid symphonic stuff where a well-trained police-force of "controlled" harmony amicably but firmly keeps the rowdier tunes in check. On the other hand, in the "uncontrolled" portions of this work, i.e. most of the exposition and recapitulation, Frankel, through over-identification, makes himself a partner of all the lazy mental backsliding (musical and otherwise) a relaxed crowd can be capable of, when he could instead have composed according to his own lights as, luckily, he mostly does. Here, he is suddenly blinded to the triteness of the unprepared dominant thirteenth (blared out by the wind at letter B) and of the mixolydian cadence $V \frac{7}{3b} - I$ (five bars later) neither of which is what it was even ten years ago. There are bandied about between the voices little contrapuntal repartees (letter D, *ff.*, and letter F) of a pit-a-pat consequentiality that reminds one of the "counterpoint" of Liszt's *Pesther Karneval*. Needless to say, even these sections are superficially effective, and the whole Prelude is worth an occasional performance for its masterly orchestration. A violin solo (before letter M) doubled an octave below by celesta, accompanied by 2nd violins and *flautando* open fifths on the cello, punctuated by a *pianissimo* trumpet call, is, to my knowledge, a new colour.—Read E \flat for E in the flute at letter C.

Benjamin Frankel. *Sonatina Leggiera* for piano, Op. 19. (Augener.) 5s.

As long as our lady composers, in best suffragette fashion, preoccupy themselves with sinewy, not to say beefy music, it will fall to the lot of men like Frankel to write, once in a while, a piece of truly feminine charm. The spirit of the well-known lady-pianist to

whom it is dedicated might well have hovered over the composition of these four movements which in turn are wistful, flirtatious, nostalgic and capricious. The harmony is partly supple, partly stubborn, the counterpoint modest, the form tasteful. A male pianist might easily lose his bearings in this texture which is tenuous yet not terse; the performer should be advised not to intellectualize his playing but to wait until it rights itself. Yet I think that there are a few passages (like the second movement's trio) that cannot right themselves even under the most sympathetic hands, because they promise too much and keep too little. Or should we never, under any circumstances, despair of a lady's charm?

George Perle. *String Quartet No. 3*, Op. 21. (New Music, Vol. 23, No. 1. New York, October, 1949.)

Analyses of twelve-tone music are as rare as they are useful. For in a manner of composing so difficultly just and justly difficult as to reward every imaginative handling of its rules with a mine of expressiveness, the analyst, if he but match his imagination and industry with the composer's, will here be much more justified than usual in insisting on his technical evidence as a proof of expressiveness in the face of a reluctant public. Which is to say, a bad twelve-tone composition can never look as good on paper as any other bad composition can. It is for these reasons that I proceed here to give the reader a detailed analysis of the first sixteen bars (first movement) of this very serious twelve-tone composition, assuring him at the same time that the other three movements (which are based on the same series) proved at closer acquaintance just as beautiful and well constructed.

The basic set is D, E \flat , A \flat , B, C, F \sharp , C \sharp , F \natural , G, A, E, B \flat , the time, 3/4 *moderato*. Of the intervals contained in this series, the most important are the *minor second* between notes 1-2 and 4-5 (also implied between 6-8, 10-12, 8-11, and even 3-9); the *perfect fifth* between 6-7, 10-11, and inverted between 2-3; and the *augmented fourth* between 5-6 and 11-12, and implied between 1-3. These three intervals used vertically as in bar 1 (d', g \sharp ', d \sharp ', i.e. notes 1, 3, 2 of the series in the upper strings) form the basic chord of the first movement, which operates formally as a tonic, otherwise operates harmonically. Thus, bar 1 is non-thematic. Bars 2-3 carry the theme in the cello, imitated fully by the viola in bars 3-4, thus creating a three-bar group. This is counterbalanced by the fifth bar, which is non-thematic and again acts as a formal, but, in spite of its apparent A major, nowise harmonic resting point. Bars 6-8 again are a three-bar group, with the shortened theme in the 2nd violin (bar 6), imitated in the 1st violin (bars 7-8), against the "basic chord" in the lower strings, now inverted to 2-3-1. In these eight bars, comprising the canonic theme and its repetition plus two "resting" bars, the series has been used four times: (1) Notes 1-3 in bar 1, notes 4-7 in the theme of bar 2, and 8-12 in the imitation of bar 3, which will thus be seen to start, characteristically, an augmented 4th higher. The slightly unorthodox formula 7-6-7 of the theme is absent from the imitation, but balanced by the 8-7-8 of bar 9, and reveals its purpose fully in bars 11-16 where appropriate notes of the series are returned to, to stress the importance of the series' minor second. (2) Notes 2, 3, 4, 6 in the continued theme (bar 3), notes 5, 8, 9 in the continued imitation (bar 4), the remainder tending towards, and within the resting bar (5). (3) Notes 1-3 in the basic chord, 4-12 in the theme and imitation (bars 6-7). (4) Notes 1-3 in the continued basic chord, 5, 7 to end the theme (1st violin), 4, 6, 8-12 to end the three-bar phrase. By a stroke of extraordinary ingenuity (or is it luck?) the twelfth note of the series at every juncture penetrates across the barline, the last time even merging, across the parts, into No. 12 of the next series. There, embedded in notes 1-6, it effectively strengthens the cohesion of the writing. In the remaining eight bars of the main section, the series is used three times. (1) A very striking inversion of 1-3 plus 7-12 in the first violin which in the course of its two bars (9 and 10) sounds sufficiently near the theme to be grasped as its counter-exposition. The inversion occurs in the minor seventh above (starting on C) since it there can be accompanied by notes 4-6 of the basic set inverted, which are of course notes 1-3 of the basic set direct *on their original pitch*.

Thus again, unity is created by the introduction of the basic chord. (2) and (3). The main group is rounded off by repeated statements of the minor 2nd (see above) in imitation and rhythmic augmentation (bars 11-16). It ends on notes 11 and 12 (an augmented 4th!), held for a bar on the violins.

The movement ends as convincingly as it starts: in its last five bars (*ppp*) which use the series twice, the cello plays, in the form of a scale (*pizz.*), all the "white notes" of the basic set, excepting No. 1 (D). This D, which is part of the basic chord, is held by the viola, the violins supplying the concomitant notes 2 and 3 (G# and E \flat). The remaining three "black notes" (A#, D \flat , and F#, Nos. 12, 7 and 6) are touched upon, and "resolve" back into the basic chord which ends the movement.

Johannes Liese. *Weisses Tastenspiel für grosse Kinder*. Eight piano pieces. (Zwilling Verlag, Berlin.)

If even F# and B \flat are against the rules, C major does not remain C major for long. It becomes pre-tonal, to wit: ionic—not a very interesting mode. Neither is the aeolian mode, to which reference is sometimes made. I expected to meet, in at least some of these pieces, the members of the modal family which are more than pre-tonal—but they were not forthcoming. Instead, Mr. Liese is intent to show how much can be done with parallel fifths in the upper parts, and sometimes even with parallel sevenths between the outer parts. Still, a teacher has sometimes to prove to a "groses Kind" how modern C major can be made to sound. In this emergency, these pieces might be useful.

Schubert. *Im Frühling, Lachen und Weinen, Rastlose Liebe*. English words by Richard Capell. (Augener.) 1s. 6d.

Mr. Capell's translations are free enough to allow for such singable brilliances as "The April grass is green and gold and blue the April sky" (beginning of *Frühling*)—in fact they are often more singable than the originals—but they sometimes needlessly sacrifice a meaning which Schubert has seen fit to express in his music. When, in *Im Frühling*, Schubert goes out of his way to depict the "dunklen Felsenquell" in his harmony, the word "shining" is not exactly suitable, nor does it allow for the bright modulation towards "Himmel blau und hell". Equally, the word "evening" should not be missing from the setting of "bei des Abendes Scheine" in *Lachen und Weinen*, nor should the quick rhymes of the beginning of *Rastlose Liebe*, reproduced by the commas of Schubert's harmony, be glossed over in a long, solid sentence.—The scores are fairly correct and very legible. "Original key" or "transposition" should be stated on top of each song.

Domenico Scarlatti. *Sonatas for Violin and Clavier*, arranged and edited by Lionel Salter. (Augener.) No. 1 in C minor, 2s.; No. 2 in D minor and No. 3 in F major, 3s.; No. 5 in G minor, 3s.

These realizations of scores (from the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice) which Mr. Salter thinks were intended as violin sonatas, will help to spread the Scarlatti gospel amongst string players. With one or two exceptions, as bar 39 of No. 5, third movement (see also my review of No. 6 in *Music Survey*, Vol. II, No. 4), Mr. Salter's realizations are excellent; indeed they are sometimes better than Scarlatti's invention. For, while the individual C minor progressions of No. 1's first movement fully come up to Scarlatti's best piano works, an awkward modulation like bars 19-20 and again bars 28-29 of No. 2's first movement would never have passed in those. It is therefore not because we mistrust Mr. Salter, but because we don't know how far to trust Scarlatti, that we regret the absence from this edition of an extensive critical report and/or the use of large and small print to distinguish Scarlatti from Mr. Salter. With a view to further publications, we should like to suggest to the schools department of Augener that in this historical era masters and students of all ages are attracted rather than deterred by the full critical apparatus.

Victor Babin. *Beloved Stranger*. Eleven love songs for low voice and piano. (Augener.) 7s. 6d.

Witter Bynner's poetry and Victor Babin's music suit each other quite well in that they both court simple grandeur without attaining it. I thought at first that this music was one of the many attempts to sell a civilized modern mysticism, in imitation of the early Vaughan Williams' genuine article, at lowest psychological cost to a public enamoured of symbolical meanings, semi-modern imagery, and darkling horizons of sentiment. But the many carefully wrought details of a score that never becomes downright laughable convince me that Mr. Babin is genuinely caught in the dilemma between the grand and the simple manner—and once a composer is so caught, God alone may help him. When the poet says in "The Wave", "You come with light on your face of the turn of the river from trees to open sun, you are the wandering spirit of the most beloved place, and yet you are a joy not there begun, but always about to be", this trails off, after a good beginning, into a kind of grandiose haziness. Equally, the music, after a good start, wanders off with the "wandering spirit" (bar 14 ff.) into some writing that isn't "begun, but always about to be". Yet I prefer this to the "grand simplicity" of song IV, where the accent is on simplicity. "There is a solitude in seeing you, followed by your vision when you're gone" is an unwarranted transcription of "I feel kinda lonely when I see you", etc.; and the music aids and abets this by crawling conjunctly from one would-be-simple common chord to another. P. H.

Victor Babin. *String Quartet*. (Augener.) 7s. 6d.

This is a vigorous and imaginative work, in a contemporary though not extreme idiom. The first movement has an impressive slow introduction, with broad melodic phrases played contrapuntally against a persistent rhythmic background. The main body of the movement is energetic and solidly built, though, for its length, it relies overmuch on rhythmic excitement; more lyric relief would be welcome. The second is of an unusual type; it begins and ends with a slow marchlike passage, very simple in texture, but undeniably effective; in the middle is a quick and lively scherzo. The short slow movement is rhapsodic in character, and of considerable beauty, especially the passage marked "con intimo sentimento". The finale has great vivacity, though its appeal is rather more superficial. The grandiose *coda* is presumably a kind of apotheosis of the fanfare-like theme that has appeared several times earlier in the movement; whether it is the inevitable outcome of what has gone before looks, on paper, uncertain, though this doubt might be dispelled by a convincing performance. The work as a whole is of real interest and originality.

John Raynor. *My Own Country* (Hilaire Belloc). (Oxford University Press.) 3s.

M. van Someren Godfery. *Death, Thy Servant; The Day is no more* (Rabindranath Tagore). (Augener.) 2s. each.

John Raynor's setting of *My Own Country* is quiet and unpretentious, with a pleasant flow in both vocal and piano parts. The idiom is refreshingly plain and diatonic; perhaps the one remote modulation would have been more effective if it had not been relegated to a piano interlude. M. van Someren Godfery's songs attempt a wider harmonic range, but they are apt to drift along in a rather aimless manner; it is only too easy to fall into vagueness when setting free verse of this kind, and the idiom here seems curiously uncertain of its direction.

Alan Richardson. *Sonatina*. 4s. 6d. *Jack in the Green*. 3s.

Francis Chagrin. *Suite Roumaine*. 3s. (Augener.)

Of these Alan Richardson's *Sonatina* is the best. It is neatly constructed, pleasant to play, and contains some attractive ideas. The frequent successions of unrelated six-four chords which give the harmony a mildly modern flavour are apt to be over-worked, and the most successful movement is the second in which their use is less obtrusive.

Jack in the Green, by the same composer, is an agreeable light-weight piece; Francis Chagrin's *Suite Roumaine* applies dissonant harmonies to commonplace material in a manner reminiscent of the 1920s.

P. F. R.

R. W. Wood. *Three Studies* for piano. (Joseph Williams.) 3s.

It was at a studio recital of the Committee for the Promotion of New Music that I first heard these three pieces. They were subsequently included in the Committee's list of recommended works and I am glad to see that they have now appeared in print. For these are excellent studies from whichever angle you care to consider them. Nos. 1 and 3 are true virtuoso pieces, the one exploiting octaves on the basis of a Sibelian *ostinato*, the other representing a kind of *perpetuo mobile* in (mainly) bitonal triplet *arpeggios*. No. 2 is a study in impressionistic evocative tone colours to which the low-lying trills of the left hand and the chromatic *glissando*-like runs impart an eerie quality. Neat in form and lying well on the keyboard, these three pieces surely deserve the attention of our recitalists.

Francis Chagrin. *Prelude and Fugue* for two violins. (Augener.) 5s.

This is yet another work that, if my memory is correct, saw its first light in a studio recital of the C.P.N.M. It reveals an aspect of style which may come as a surprise to those who are only familiar with this composer's film music. The writing is rather severe and one might criticize the inordinate length of the fugal subject (to which stricture the composer may well retort by reminding us of the fugal theme of the "*Hammerklavier*"); moreover, the accumulation of difficult double-stoppings on the last page or so of the fugue is likely to result in harshness of tone and questionable intonation. Yet the contrapuntal writing is first-rate and there is a compelling sense of purpose and direction about the work as a whole. A satisfactory rendering of it will require two players of considerable skill.

Gordon Jacob. *Rhapsody*, cor anglais and strings. Arrangement for cor anglais and piano by John Addison. (Joseph Williams.) 6s. 6d.

In form there is hardly anything rhapsodic about this work. On the contrary, its structural design is on strict classical lines. Of the two movements, the first is in sonata-form with two subjects, but (like many classical overtures) without development, and the second has the character of a scherzo with a lyrical middle section, the whole being rounded off by a *coda* of reminiscences. It was presumably the character of the first movement's thematic ideas to which the work owes its title, *viz.* the first subject—a well-sustained lyrical theme that seems to have been directly inspired by the solo instrument. There is, incidentally, an unmistakable Celtic flavour about it: pentatonic turns and characteristic syncopations and, more generally, a wistful expression and a wayward course—in short, a theme most fitting for a *Rhapsody*.

The work is ingeniously constructed, the composer resorting to the device of theme-transformation to provide from the first movement the material for a mercurial scherzo whose astringent dryness, incidentally, comes as an effective contrast. (Even the *ostinato* bass from the first movement's opening is not lost sight of in the scherzo.) The writing for the cor anglais is, as one expects from this master of the orchestra, exemplary, and as far as one may judge from Mr. Addison's arrangement—which, in this case, wisely, sacrifices purely pianistic considerations to a complete showing of the orchestral texture—the strings are treated in a most sympathetic manner. Altogether, this is a worth-while contribution to the singularly scanty literature for the cor anglais and is bound to give pleasure to the soloist as well as his audience.

M. C.

Gramophone Records

Boito: Mefistofele: Prologo and "Son lo spirito".

Boris Christoff with the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Nicolai Malko.



His Master's Voice DB 21047. 9s. 8½d.

This great bass, who is in the true Chaliapine tradition, never interferes with his voice-production however strongly he may characterize a part. The music should be a pleasant surprise to newcomers to Boito. Excellent recording.

Beethoven: Violin Concerto in D, Op. 61.

Joseph Szigeti with the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York, c. Bruno Walter.

Columbia LX 1298-1302. 48s. 6½d.

An uneven performance. In the first movement, Bruno Walter often gently improves on Szigeti's phrasing, and conducts the *tutti* with comfortable exactness (see that lovely change of colour in bar 64). Szigeti is at his best in the second movement's beginning (e.g. the differentiation between the *tenuti* of his first two bars, the accents in his 7th bar). In the last movement, Szigeti starts too fast for his own comfort, and Walter rushes away at the slightest provocation: but far from agreeing to each other's inherent *accelerando*, they race and halt each other alternately in the first (A major) and in the second (G minor) episode of the rondo. Szigeti on the one hand produces gems of phrasing like the energetic repartee to the orchestra's break-in after the first solo in the rondo; on the other, he misses the significance of a passage like the last (G minor) section of the 1st movement's development where his tone and phrasing do not suit the, commendably, slower *tempo*. Sometimes the good and bad are bewilderingly mixed in a single phrase; the real quality of the 4th to 9th bar of his second entry in the *Larghetto* is marred by a wild *ritenuto* in the 4th, and a melodramatic slur in the 6th bar. On the technical side, there are somewhat too many mishaps, and in exposed passages, as the three cadenzas, his technique has that eager and tortuous quality more often found in very young players. The recording is very rough.

Bach: Prelude and Fugue for Organ in E minor.

Fernando Germani (recorded in Westminster Cathedral).

His Master's Voice C 3984-5. 13s. 8d.

Heavy registration, and the double filter of cathedral-space and recording-machine oblige one to listen to this with the score to find anything over and above an edifying cataract of sacred strains. The fugue becomes unclear from its 2nd(!) entry on, and the ensuing passage-work approaches the gliding scale of a siren. Germani's serious musicality occasionally peeps out between the clouds.

Mozart: Rondo of Serenade No. 7 in D major, K.250 (The "Haffner").

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Karl Böhm; Solo-violin Willi Boskowsky.

His Master's Voice C 3990. 6s. 10d.

It is good to have a movement "on record" which many know only in the mutilated Kreisler-version for violin and piano. Playing and recording fair.

Chopin: Mazurkas in D major, Op. 33, No. 2, and A minor, Op. 67, No. 4 (posth.).

Halina Stefanska.

His Master's Voice B 9931. 5s. 9d.

Mme. Stefanska's touch has the steely resilience, her rhythm not quite the subtlety of Arthur Rubinstein, the greatest living exponent of these dances. Playing of considerable intelligence.

P. H.

Lalo: Concerto in D minor for Violoncello and Orchestra.

Suggia and The London Symphony Orchestra, c. de Freitas Branco.
Decca AX 349-52. 38s. 10d.

*Vivaldi: Concerto in D minor, and**Albinoni: Allegro from Concerto in B flat.*

Leon Goossens and The Philharmonia String Orchestra, c. Süßkind.
Columbia DX 8367-68. 13s. 8d.

Lalo's Concerto is evidently thought little of these days. Apart from Maréchal's old American rendering it has been unobtainable on records, Veinus in his treatise *The Concerto* and Bonavia in his *Musical Companion* essay on the form do not even mention it and we do not easily recall a public performance in recent seasons. The popular assessment of Lalo suggests that all this is no loss; but two things strike one on hearing the work again. Firstly it is superior, as a concerto, to *Symphonie Espagnole* which is in the repertoires of several concert violinists and has been representatively recorded. Secondly, in spite of Lalo's weak command of the orchestra, he has, in this work, solved the formidable technical difficulties of writing effectively for the cello concerto-wise. This issue is therefore timely. But in spite of the beauty of Suggia's playing, it is unacceptable. The balance between soloist and orchestra and between instrumental groups is deplorable. Details of orchestration are hinted at only to be lost in a welter of noise and the *tutti* bark at the cello as if she had offended in making herself heard at all.

Goossens records one-and-a-bit more quasi-oboe concertos with his usual urbane artistry. Given tasteful arrangements perhaps composers like Vivaldi and Albinoni do not suffer undue debasement by this treatment of their fiddle music; but it would be nice to hear occasional works as they once were so as to see for ourselves. Boyd Neel is the man to record them. Incidentally the Albinoni movement is more interesting than those of his better known contemporary.

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64.

La Scala Orchestra, c. Cantelli.

His Master's Voice DB 21187-91. 48s. 6½d.

Whether or not a new recording of this work were called for we do not know. Whatever the situation, this issue, an untidy performance coarsely recorded, leaves the *status quo*. We do not mind this much, but those who do can safely leave these expensive records on the shelf.

Debussy: La Mer.

The Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Galliera.

Columbia DX 1726-28. 20s. 6d.

Mendelssohn: Overture, Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage, Op. 27, and Scherzo from Midsummer Night's Dream.

The Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Kubelik.

His Master's Voice C 7836-37. 13s. 8d.

*Nicolai: Overture, "The Merry Wives of Windsor".**

The London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Boult.

His Master's Voice DB 21223. 9s. 8½d.

Whereas the recording of Debussy's capricious and often wildly vociferous sea is done smoothly and graciously, that of Mendelssohn's well behaved ocean, changeable but predictable, is done roughly and with unnecessary noise and fuss. We cannot recommend the Mendelssohn. On the odd side Kubelik gives an interesting reading of the Scherzo, which has for some time been a stalking horse for conductors aiming at a reputation on records, but he uses the wood wind with incomprehensible weight and fairyland is far, far to seek.

* Strongly recommended.

La Mer is performed competently and is recorded sufficiently well for us to wonder that the same orchestra is in fact playing in the two recordings.

Sir Adrian Boult's presentation of *The Merry Wives* is delicious in a recording good enough to set off some lovely playing by the L.P.O.

Mozart: *Il Flauto Magico, Act I, "Oh Cara Immagine"*.

Petre Munteanu with Grande Orchestra Sinfonica di Torino della Radio Italiana, c. Rossi, and

Verdi: *Il Trovatore, Act II, "Il Balen"*,

Carlo Tagliabue and EIAR Orchestra, c. Tansini.

Parlophone R 30031. 9s. 8½d.

Puccini: *Madame Butterfly, Act II, "Un bel di vedremo"*, and

Verdi: *La Traviata, Act III, "Addio del passato"*.

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Galliera.

Columbia LX 1370. 9s. 8½d.

This latest "Cetra" issue of Parlophone offers two oft-recorded *arias*, each beautifully sung and accompanied. On the Verdi side, however, is a surface hiss of formidable intensity which halves its value as a buy. We should like to hear more of Munteanu. Miss Schwarzkopf's "*One Fine Day*" compares well with the fairly recent Tebaldi and Cebotari records, considering that those two are fine Italian singers and she is a fine non-Italian, which, with Puccini, counts always. Her record is not so well engineered as the Tebaldi-Decca issue. The lower level of tone makes for a better recording in the *Traviata* *aria* and Miss Schwarzkopf sings it ravishingly.

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 7 in A, Op. 92*.*

The Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Galliera.

Columbia DX 1697-1701. 34s. 2d.

Mozart: *Symphony No. 41 in C, K. 551 and March in D, K. 249*.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

Columbia LX 1337-40. 38s. 10d.

Roussel: *Symphony No. 4 in A, Op. 53*.*

The Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Karajan.

Columbia LX 1348-50 and LXS 1351. 34s.

Haydn: *Symphony No. 93 in D*.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

Columbia LX 1361-63. 29s. 1½d.

Galliera's performance of the seventh Symphony deserves its star if only for the scherzo, given here with that full degree of impetuosity required for its realization. It is so easy to play this movement gracefully and Beethoven, when really good humoured, is never graceful. We might quarrel with some capricious *tempi* in the *allegretto*, but this is a grand all-round performance and a most acceptable recording.

Beecham's Haydn record is much to be preferred to that of Cantelli, reviewed on p. 174 of the last issue. But it is scarcely perfect. It gives the fatal impression of using much too large an orchestra, which may be partly a recording fault. The Mozart is much better. Rushing a few fences, Sir Thomas sails over all of them with elegance and his hold on the reins is always sufficiently masterful to permit the occasional idiosyncratic tug. Happily though we accept his humours, we are not called upon to take in the engineers' and have to mention that the records fade off at the centres and that the tonal intensity is not consistent as between sides.

Roussel's last symphony is a magnificent work. Less angular of rhythm than the third, it is also of a greater complexity in counterpoint; yet its developments are of crystal

* Strongly recommended.

clarity and generate an exhilarating drive in all four movements. Its thematic content is rich, and its aspect is unsentimentally genial. Here are an acid wit that does not sting, perky tunes that are not pert, and contrapuntal handling that never sags, expressed with a lightness of touch concealing great inner constructive strength. In fact, here is a French masterpiece. Recording is on the weighty side, but good enough to earn the recommendation which the appearance of the work, and its performance under Karajan, deserve.

Phyllis Tate: Nocturne for Four Voices.

E. Hooke, R. Soames, F. Fuller, W. Parsons. Hurwitz String Quartet with W. Hambleton, E. Merrett and E. Lush, c. Mosco Carner.

Decca AK 2400-02. 24s. 9d.

The issue of this recording is sponsored by the British Council. Now this means either that this organization really believes the work to be representative of something or other to do with our contemporary artistic output as a nation, or it is not doing its job. We hope the latter, on this occasion.

The work is a miserable whine. As a setting of a very poor poem—*genre*, early Charlotte Street—it is atmospherically appropriate. The bass asks "Why should there be a dawn?", the tenor advises "Drown yourself" and the soprano invites "Come sweet death and be my joy". We hope so; the sooner he calls for this stuff the better. Better for the perpetrators they should have to start again than face the decay which has always withered deliberately invertebrate art. The putrefaction blowing cross-channel from the caves of existentialism has intoxicated Miss Tate. She whines with the abandon of the lost and, incidentally, with the technical proficiency to be expected from a clever girl of *école Britten*—which nowadays translates into business English as "British School". The composer makes effective use of bass clarinet, double bass and celesta to colour the grim words and the bleak string accompaniment. The recording of these instruments, and of the singers, is superb.

Rossini: Barber of Seville—Overture.

The Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Galliera.

Columbia DX 1690. 6s. 10d.

Johann Strauss: Wiener Blut—Waltz, Op. 354.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Karajan.

Columbia LX 1321. 9s. 8½d.

Ravel: Ma Mere l'Oye—Suite.

London Symphony Orchestra, c. Previtali.

His Master's Voice C 7824-25. 13s. 8d.

*Shostakovich: Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk: (a) The Drunks at the Wedding, (b) Burying the Corpse in the Cellar, (c) The Ghost Disappears.**

The Janssen Symphony Orchestra, c. Werner Janssen.

Capitol CK 51004. 9s. 8½d.

Those who possess the Toscanini version of *The Barber* will not wish to change, and perhaps they are right. But, of more recent recordings, this is quite the best and much to be preferred to the Rankl-N.S.O. issue. Karajan's *Wiener Blut* drags painfully; Vienna Blood, like the Blue Danube, courses, we imagine; or at any rate, flows. Here it clots.

Mother Goose with the present label scores narrowly, on recording grounds, over the Beer-N.S.O. issue of Decca, but buyers should make up their own minds. Both issues are commendable, with no superlatives.

In his excellent little book *A Survey of Russian Music* M. D. Calvocoressi said of *Lady Macbeth*—"certain orchestral episodes are effective". This faint praise seems to us to be true in its positive aspect, for the three excerpts offered here are indeed effective, and in spite of the hard things said of the opera, induce the hope for more recorded excerpts.

* Strongly recommended.

The lugubrious titles need not put one off; for the music too is splendidly lugubrious, from the first drunk, sliding trombone-wise under the table, to the last swish of ghostly swathes. All the amusement is excellently pointed by the orchestra on a very well-made record.

Schubert: Du Bist die Ruh', Op. 59, No. 3, and

An die Leier, Op. 56, No. 2.

Flora Nielsen and Gerald Moore.

His Master's Voice C 4057. 6s. 10d.

Schumann: Frauenliebe und Leben, Op. 42.

Elisabeth Schumann and Gerald Moore.

His Master's Voice DB 9568-69 and DBS 9569. 24s. 3½d.

Denza: Occhi di Fata, and Brogi: Visione Veneziana.

Siepi with Orchestra, c. Gallino.

Parlophone RO 30001. 6s. 5½d.

Ponchielli: La Gioconda—Act I, "O Monumento!" and

Verdi: La Forza del Destino—Act III. Recit. and Aria: "Urna Fatale del mio Destino".

Silveri with London Symphony Orchestra, c. Goehr.

Columbia LX 1359. 9s. 8½d.

Bellini: Norma—Act III. Recit. and Aria: "Ah del Trebo".

Pasero with Chorus and Orchestra of EIAR, c. Vittorio Gui, and

Verdi: La Forza del Destino—Act II, "L'immonda cenere".

Canigli, Pasero and Meletti with Chorus and Orchestra of EIAR, c. Gino Marinuzzi.

Parlophone R 30029. 9s. 8½d.

Flora Nielsen sings two very difficult Schubert songs with fine musicianship and an adequate voice. In recommending the record we hope that the surface damage (a smooth-edged depression, not a scratch), which spoils our full enjoyment of *An die Leier*, is not present on the copies for sale. This is, incidentally, the only recorded version of that song.

Elisabeth Schumann's recital of her great namesake's Op. 42 is also a most artistic performance. Her command of feeling and the subtlety of her phrasing are alike impressive; and her voice is still very beautiful. Only at one point does she fail; the last, low note of *Helft mir ihr Schwestern* is, to be polite, of not very certain pitch. There is also a curious recording phenomenon; a ghost-piano plays the opening chords of the seventh and eighth songs a moment before the pianist. The piano part of both the above issues is impeccably performed. Moore's rendering of Schumann's closing reflections, for piano alone, is a masterly upholding of the work's essential feeling after the voice is stilled. It is only right to say that anyone preferring the contralto voice in this cycle should not hesitate to buy the two-year-old Decca issue with Astra Desmond and Phyllis Spurr.

Siepi has a fine bass voice and the ballads he sings show it off without impressing or offending. If Silveri, in his more serious contributions, had shown some of Siepi's restraint and could rid himself of a fatal *vibrato* we should look to his recordings with more pleasure than we found in the present issue. We cannot recommend it. Nor, in spite of some lovely solo singing especially from still another bass, Pasero, is the Parlophone record acceptable; the chorus is so badly placed that we are not always sure when it is present. This lack of balance ruins two most stylish operatic excerpts.

Haydn: Quartet in C, Op. 76, No. 3.

Amadeus Quartet.

His Master's Voice C 4066-68. 20s. 6d.

Mendelssohn: Capriccio in E minor, Op. 81.

Busch Quartet.

Columbia LX 1311. 9s. 8½d.

Apart from our preference for the "Emperor" movement played rather faster than here and a feeling, equally subjective perhaps, that the first violin tone is too thin and cold, we recommend the Amadeus issue of this famous work. It is nicely recorded.

We know of no other version of the Mendelssohn *Capriccio*, nor of the *Andante in E*, *Scherzo in A Minor* and *Fugue in E♭*, which with it makes up Op. 81, all intended for string orchestra. We meet it on bad terms; recording faults loom large between us and the performers, one of whom incidentally plays a note more than Mendelssohn wrote—unfortunately after everyone else has finished.

Schumann: *Etudes Symphoniques*, Op. 13* and
Vogel als Prophet, Op. 82, No. 7.

M. Lympany.

His Master's Voice C 4051-53. 2os. 6d.

Debussy: *Preludes—Book 1*.

Cortot.

His Master's Voice DB 9578-82. 48s. 6½d.

Copland: *Four Piano Blues*.

Copland.

Decca K 2372. 8s. 3d.

Bloch: *Jewish Song* and
Supplication.

Zara Nelsova and Ernest Bloch.

Decca M 664. 5s. 9d.

Miss Lympany's is an outstanding performance and Op. 13, bearing as it does the germs of Schumann's later greatness and at the same time establishing his mature piano style, is a minor, but sturdy pillar of music which none who love the piano should be without. Recording is excellent.

The fact that most professional pianists can give a good Beethoven rendering, many a good Chopin, some a good Schumann and a few, all too few, a good Debussy, has nothing whatever to do with the relative statures of these composers or complexities of their styles. It has to do purely and simply with subtlety of mind. And when a really great pianist is possessed of the necessary flexibility of perception, and only then, we get Debussy to the life. Here it is with the Cortot issue. The heartbreak for this reviewer was that side 8, with two of the loveliest preludes, is a swinger with a vicious surface hiss, and because of that we do not star the set. Buyers should test that side and should then proceed to check "*Cathédrale Engloutie*" against any one of the myriad modern renderings for a quick assessment of Cortot's Debussy and plain pianists' Debussy; they may then decide on the set—faults and all.

We had always connected blues with a vocal line. Copland's piano pieces have a degree of fragmentation which does not sustain at all the feeling we get from a blues singer. Yet, if they have a feeling translatable in terms of hue—blue it certainly is. We have heard bar pianists in American cities doodling to similar effect; Copland has achieved an easily captured mood by no very distinguished means.

Bloch and Nelsova give a rich and haunting performance of two slight but evocative pieces, acceptable as true examples of Jewish feeling in music, lush and obvious, but with a nobility that is generated by sincerity.

J. B.

Tchaikovsky: *The Gypsy. At the Ball*.

Mascia Predit, acc. Gerald Moore.

His Master's Voice DA 1941. 6s. 5½d.

Both songs are in a rather phoney folk idiom, but they are brilliantly performed (half acted) and memorably accompanied. Adequate recording.

* Strongly recommended.

Schubert: *An die Musik*, Op. 88, No. 4. *Der Musensohn*, Op. 92, No. 1.

Kathleen Ferrier, acc. Phyllis Spurr.

Decca M 652. 5s. 9d.

Somehow Miss Ferrier's voice is not quite intimate enough for the more intimate of Schubert's *lieder*. In *An die Musik*, "Du holde Kunst" is awkwardly phrased, and an absurd hastening by the pianist at the song's conclusion suggests that she is trying to beat the record to the finishing post. *Der Musensohn* suffers from much the same faults, although the accompaniment is even more flat-footed (or fingered) and all accentual subtleties are lost. The final, crashing *forte* chord is the wrong sort of artistic surprise.

Wolf: *Die Ihr schwebet* (*Spanisches Liederbuch*, Vol. I, No. 4). *In der Frühe* (Mörike).

Flora Nielsen, acc. Gerald Moore.

His Master's Voice B 9916. 5s. 9d.

Miss Nielsen seems to find it difficult to recover from the shaky start she makes in *Die Ihr schwebet* and the whole song collapses through utter lack of integration between voice and piano. Wolf builds up his phrasing on a "partnership" system between his two performers—a collaboration quite unachieved by Miss Nielsen and Mr. Moore. Thus Miss Nielsen's melodic line is neither very musical nor is it Wolf's. The remarkable modulations of *In der Frühe* don't receive the attention they should, and generally Miss Nielsen's temperament does not appear to be suited to Wolf in this mood.

Beethoven: *Sonata No. 10 in G major*, Op. 96.

Hephzibah and Yehudi Menuhin.

His Master's Voice DB 6495-97. 29s. 1½d.

A shocking set, both technically and artistically. On each disc woolliness sets in midway which effectively obscures a performance never very acceptable on musical grounds. Dynamics grotesquely exaggerated; excessive and obtrusive *vibrato*; to accent a note Menuhin literally seems to lean on his bow; idiotically over-played *sforzandos*; coarse piano tone; not a hint of the kind of special, almost neo-classical lyricism Beethoven had achieved in this period; phrasing in the scherzo's trio quite contrary to the true nature of the music; pages in the finale are perfect examples of meaningless, unmusical mechanization; of the extraordinarily subtle variation structure of the last movement there is not a sign of even elementary understanding. To say that I prefer the Decca set (Rostal and Osborn) is something of an understatement.

Wagner: *Stehe Still*. (*Wesendonck Gedichte* No. 2.)

Der Engel. (*Wesendonck Gedichte* No. 1.)

Flagstad, acc. Gerald Moore.

His Master's Voice DB 6841. 9s. 8½d.

Elisabeth Höngen, acc. Gerald Moore.

Columbia LX 1282. 9s. 8½d.

In both songs Höngen is to be recommended; and the engineers have served her better. In *Der Engel* she is by far the more compelling and intelligent, although by no means so effortless. As a voice, pure and simple, Flagstad is, of course, incomparable. To compare the relative merits of the two interpretations, play the opening phrase of this song. Whereas Höngen reacts to the phrase and makes something musical of it, Flagstad's response is quite passive: the phrase sings her, as it were. In *Stehe Still* blasting spoils Flagstad's powerful top notes, and once again Höngen's display of exultant temperament is more artistically satisfying than Flagstad's mere increase in tone, superior vocally though it is.

Albéniz, *trans. Arbós: Iberia.*

Lamoureux Orchestra of Paris, c. de Freitas Branco.

His Master's Voice DB 9462-65. 38s. 10d.

Albéniz's piano suite transcribed for orchestra: its movements include the justly famed *Triana*. Exception cannot be taken to the arrangement as such: it is skilful and not tasteless. But in the process of instrumentation Albéniz' sometimes astringent harmony has been softened up and all its tension lost. I do not mean that notes have been altered: merely that what is harsh on the keyboard has been reduced to sweet sonority by cunning orchestration. From this point of view Arbós' transcription runs counter to Albéniz' intentions and makes of *Iberia* a lesser, more conservative work than it actually is. Recording and performance are excellent.

Chopin: *Etude No. 27 in A flat major. Etude No. 25 in F minor.*

Waltz No. 6 in D flat major. Etude No. 26 in D flat major.

Cortot. His Master's Voice DB 21070. 9s. 8½d.

Despite lethargic pedalling, absence of rhythmic precision, and excessive *rubato*, a good deal of the genuine, poetic Chopin shines through. The Cortot of (regrettably) fading powers is much to be preferred to the slicker accomplishments of younger and now more accomplished pianists. In Cortot's case the technique dies, but the artist in him doesn't. The recording is good.

Debussy: *Ballade.* Gieseking. Columbia LB 97. 6s. 5½d.

A not very remarkable piece remarkably well played and ably recorded.

Mozart: *Serenade in G major, Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (K. 525).

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Karajan.

Columbia LX 1293-94. 19s. 5d.

Too large a body of strings. Next, Karajan sacrifices everything to surface brilliance. The phrasing is either choppy or, more often, superficially elegant—an elegance achieved by skin-deep manipulation of *tempo*, never by a feeling-through of the structure of the theme itself. Karajan's top-line obsession is to the fore in the *andante* where he pays little attention to Mozart's inner parts. Absurd *détaché* phrasing of the minuet's subject ensures that the subject falls apart—which it inevitably does; and the fragments are buried in the suitably funereal subsequent trio. The repeat proves to be no resurrection. Best played is the final *allegro*, but even here Karajan doesn't know what to do with Mozart's mercurial melodic extensions which seem to extend far beyond the range of his imagination. The recorded string tone is shrill throughout.

Fauré: *Nocturne No. 4 in E flat major, Op. 36.* Kathleen Long. Decca M 655. 5s. 9d.

Fauré's very lovely *Nocturne* is not improved by a most injudicious break and a dull recording which converts Miss Long's customary *cantabile* into an affair of strings and hammers.

Franck: *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue.* Malcuzyński (pianoforte). Columbia LX 1269-70. 19s. 5d.

Malcuzyński's exaggerated pianisms suit Franck's never very musical music—a work which, even for Franck, is exceptionally spineless from the structural point of view. The sobbing fugue subject makes me weep for the wrong reasons long before Franck stiffens up the texture with a shot of faked counterpoint. This set distorts badly towards the centre of each disc.

Franch: Cantabile. Jeanne Demessieux. Decca K 2360. 8s. 3d.

The title tells us the whole truth and nothing but the truth about this sticky piece. If you like organs, as distinct from music, you will probably like this record; both performance and reproduction are excellent.

Debussy: Ballade No. 2. La Grotte. Mandoline.

Gerard Souzay and L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, c. Edouard Lindenberg.

Decca K 2333. 8s. 3d.

The label does not tell us who is responsible for the orchestrations of these songs. But in any case the orchestra is obscured by placing the voice much too near the microphone. The seemingly disembodied M. Souzay seems to sing out of tune some of the time; and his voice is by no means light enough for *Mandoline*.

Tartini: Sonata in G Minor for violin and piano, "The Devil's Trill", and

Tartini: Presto in B flat major (arr. L. Bridgewater).

Campoli, acc. by Eric Gritton.

Decca AK 2366-67. 16s. 6d.

Generally a very capable performance, but the recording is extremely strident (double-stopping pains the ear especially) and no attempt seems to have been made to balance the violin and piano. If Tartini's trills are devilish, how may we describe his infernal sequences?

Bach: Toccata in C major (arr. Busoni).

Gina Bachauer.

His Master's Voice C 3969-70. 13s. 8d.

This combination of Busoni and Miss Bachauer leaves little impression of the true Bach. Miss Bachauer's giant sonorities—one can almost see her lifting her fists preparatory to dropping them on the keyboard—are literally stunning. Between these epic explosions certain deficiencies in sensitivity may be noted: clumsy phrasing of Bach's cadential suspensions, the left hand occasionally a fraction of a step out with the right, grotesque accentuation (perhaps involuntary?) of single notes which makes musical nonsense of their context and themselves. The *tempo* of the fugue slackens somewhat, but nothing exhausts Miss Bachauer's overwhelming powerful tonal resources which remain unimpaired to the bitter end. The recording of this unique performance is more than adequate.

Schubert: Quartettsatz in C minor, Op. Posth.

The New Italian Quartet.

Decca K 2329. 8s. 3d.

Edgy string tone is evident, possibly more the fault of the players than the recording; and the quartet is not always in tune. Worst offender as far as poor intonation goes is the leader, who suffers a severe attack of musical nerves on every occasion he is faced with one of Schubert's expansive musical ideas. Schubert's musical ideas suffer accordingly.

D. M.

Mozart: Die Zauberflöte, "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen," and

Così fan Tutte, "Donne mie la fate a tantie".

Marko Rothmüller with the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Robertson.

His Master's Voice C 4054. 6s. 10d.

Verdi: Un Ballo in Maschera, "Volla la terrea", and "Saper vorreste".*

Alda Noni with the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Süsskind.

His Master's Voice DA 1954. 6s. 5½d.

* Strongly recommended.

Verdi: *Don Carlos*, Recit. "Ella giammai m'amo", and
Aria "Dormiro sol nel manto mio regal".*

Raphael Arie with L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Erede.

Decca X 442. 9s. 8½d.

Puccini: *La Bohème*, "Che gelida manina", and
Turandot, "Non piangere Liu".

Eugene Conley with The New Symphony Orchestra, c. Kisch and Erede.

Decca X 402. 9s. 8½d.

La Bohème, "Donde lieta usci", and

Turandot, "Signore, ascolta".*

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf with the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Galliera.

Columbia LB 110. 6s. 5½d.

La Bohème: "Che gelida manina", and

Boito: *Mefistofele*: "Ogni mortal mister gustai".

Giovanni Malipiero and EIAR Orchestra, c. Tansini.

Parlophone R 30032. 9s. 8½d.

Flotow: *Marta*, "M'appari tutt'amor", and

Donizetti: *La Favorita*, "Spirto gentile".

Gianni Poggi with Orchestra Sinfonia de Milano, c. Narducci.

Columbia LX 1364. 9s. 8½d.

This is as attractive a bevy of opera snatches as any we have received in recent years. The Rothmüller issue would be starred were it not for marked coarseness in recording which affects the accompaniment mainly. His singing of the difficult *Costi aria* is superb and Papageno's famous plaint is made the more attractive by the inclusion of his little monologue, most beautifully spoken. The Noni record is terrific *coloratura* singing perfectly recorded: "Volta la Terra", a real *diva's* test piece, can never have been managed better. Compared with this soprano, Schwarzkopf's voice is cool and fragile and in its own way, very beautiful. It is not possible to find fault with her performance at any point in an issue excellently served by orchestra and engineers alike. In the long recitative and *aria* from *Don Carlos*, Arie is magnificently accompanied, especial commendation being due to the solo cellist. The singer himself is in good voice and the recording astonishingly life-like; we have noticed before the general excellence of operatic records made under Signor Erede's direction and here he excels himself.

Between Conley and Malipiero, each singing "Che gelida manina", it is difficult to choose. We prefer the Malipiero issue only because he pairs the overworked Puccini *aria* with an unusual contribution from *Mefistofele* and, too, the Parlophone record gets more orchestral detail into the performance. In the *Marta-Favorita* coupling made inseparable by Caruso, Poggi distinguishes himself, avoiding the easy histrionics that have so often ruined two pleasant songs. Had Flotow's top B flat and Donizetti's C been held a little less long, these would have been models for any Italian opera aspirant.

Mozart: *Die kleine Spinnerin*, K. 531, and *Einsam ging Ich jungst*, K. 308.

I. Seefried, acc. G. Moore.

Columbia LB 108. 6s. 5½d.

Schubert: *Nacht und Träume*, Op. 43, No. 2, and *Auf dem Wasser zu singen*, Op. 72.*

I. Seefried, acc. G. Moore.

Columbia LB 106. 6s. 5½d.

Schäfers Klagelied, and

Schumann: *Flutenreicher Ebro*, Op. 138, No. 5.

A. Schiötz, acc. G. Moore.

His Master's Voice DB 21226. 9s. 8½d.

* Strongly recommended.

*Moussorgsky: The Star and Night.**

M. Predit, acc. G. Moore.

His Master's Voice DB 21144. 9s. 8½d.

Mahler: Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen.

B. Thebom with Orchestra, c. Boult.

His Master's Voice DB 9576-7. 19s. 5d.

Irmgard Seefried's singing of the difficult *Nacht und Träume* is very fine indeed; this is one of the many Schubert songs that look easy and generally sound awful at the hands of anyone less than first-class. *Auf dem Wasser* matches it both for performance and recording. The same artist's Mozart is also good, but, using rather more voice, she has not been recorded with quite the same smoothness as in the companion record. This is very well worth having since these songs do not appear elsewhere in English lists.

Aksel Schiøtz' record is badly engineered, the principal offence being muffled piano tone. Schlussnus sings Schumann's fine song at least as well on the much better made Decca X 313; in view of that recent issue it is a great pity that Schiøtz did not choose one of the remaining numbers from the *Spanish love songs*, which are still unrecorded. His singing of the Schubert is so good that our resentment at the poor recording is more than doubled.

The Moussorgsky songs, gloriously sung, are Rimsky-Korsakov arrangements, which give Gerald Moore rather more to do than perhaps the composer intended. He does it with fine restraint and helps to make as near perfect a recording of voice and piano as has appeared in a long time.

Sir Adrian Boult manages his nameless orchestra very well indeed in the Mahler issue and Blanche Thebom's mezzo voice—her low notes are of full contralto quality—suits the text. A sound performance acceptably recorded.

*Chopin: Waltzes.*Nos. 1, Op. 18, *E flat* and 2, Op. 34, *A flat* LX 1341Nos. 3, Op. 34, *A minor*, 4, Op. 34, *F* and 13, Op. 70, *D flat* LX 1342Nos. 5, Op. 42, *A flat*, 6, Op. 64, *D flat* and 8, Op. 64, *A flat* LX 1343Nos. 7, Op. 64, *C sharp minor*, and 9, Op. 69, *A flat* LX 1344Nos. 10, Op. 69, *B minor*, 11, Op. 70, *G flat* and 12, Op. 70, *F minor* LX 1345No. 4, *Posth. E minor*, and *Mazurka*, Op. 50, No. 3 in *C sharp minor* LX 1346

Dinu Lipatti.

9s. 8½d. each.*

*Chopin: Berceuse in D flat, Op. 57, and**Prelude in D flat, Op. 28, No. 15.*

Cortot. His Master's Voice DB 21175. 9s. 8½d.

*Chopin: Scherzo in E, Op. 54, and**Chopin-Liszt: "My Joys".*

Arrau. Columbia LX 8792-3. 19s. 5d.

*Chopin: Fantasia in F minor, Op. 49, and**Saint-Saëns: Prelude and Fugue in F minor.*

Shura Cherkassky. His Master's Voice DB 9599-9600. 19s. 5d.

The complete issue of the *Waltzes* brings home powerfully how great a loss Lipatti's early death has been. Subtlety of phrasing and magnificence of technique are sustained throughout. The prospective buyer should try over *Op. 64, No. 1*; if Lipatti's playing of this tiny piece does not make the point instantly, then it is missed completely and the listener might just as well not bother further.

* Strongly recommended.

None of the rest come up to the *Waltzes'* issue. Cherkassky's performance of the *Fantasia* may be compared to this pianist's credit with that of Malcuzyński on Columbia LX 1211-2; both performance and recording are more convincing and the Saint-Saëns fill-up is unexpectedly good entertainment; perhaps we should hear more than we do of that composer's piano works.

Cortot plays the "*Raindrop*" prelude beautifully, but if buying the record for the *Berceuse* one should go back a year or two to Solomon on His Master's Voice C 3308. Neither the Cortot nor the Arrau issues are well recorded. Arrau plays the unrewarding E major Scherzo splendidly, and makes something of "*My Joys*", an arrangement, incidentally, in which Liszt showed unwonted taste and restraint.

J. B.

CHAMBER MUSIC

Haydn: Divertimento in G, Op. 31, 1.

London Baroque Ensemble, c. Karl Haas SW 8118-9

St. Anthony Divertimento.

London Baroque Ensemble, c. Karl Haas SW 8120-1*

Mozart: Quintet in G minor, K. 516.

Griller Quartet with Max Gilbert AX 343-6

ORCHESTRAL

Balakirev: Symphony in C.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Karajan LX 1323-8*

Bantock: Fife at the Fair.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham DB 21145-8*

Bartók: Music for strings, percussion and celesta.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Karajan LX 1371-4

Beethoven: Piano Concerto in C minor, Op. 37.

Backhaus, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Böhm AX 373-6

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Karajan LX 1330-3*

Symphony No. 7 in A, Op. 92.

Concertgebouw Orchestra, c. Kleiber AX 406-10*

Chabrier: Suite Pastorale.

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Martinon AX 390-1

Debussy: Iberia, and Berceuse héroïque.

L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts, c. Münch AX 490-2

Delius: A Song of Summer.

Hallé Orchestra, c. Barbirolli DB 9609-10*

Dukas: L'Apprenti Sorcier.

L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts, c. Jorda AX 437-8*

Dvořák: Scherzo Capriccioso, Op. 66.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Kubelik C 7822-3*

Elgar: Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 61.

Heifetz, London Symphony Orchestra, c. Sargent DB 21056-60

Falstaff, Op. 68.

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Boult DB 9603-6*

Gluck: Overture, Alceste.

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Furtwängler GX 61008*

* Strongly recommended.

Handel: Water Music.

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. van Beinum AX 495-6*

Mozart: Violin Concerto in G, K. 216.

Gioconda de Vito, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham DB 21177-9*

Symphony No. 36 in C, K. 425.

Danish Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra, c. Busch DB 20115-7*

Requiem, K. 626.

Werner Pech, Hans Breitschopf, Walter Ludwig, Harald
Pröglhöf, Vienna Hofmusikkapelle, c. Krips AX 366-72*

Nielsen: Symphony No. 5, Op. 50.

Danish Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra, c. Tuxen Z 7022-6*

Reger: Vier Tondichtungen, Op. 128.

German Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Keilberth GX 61010-2*

Schubert: Symphony No. 8 in B minor.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Furtwängler DB 21131-3*

Strauss (R.): Tod und Verklärung.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Furtwängler DB 21169-71

Salome, Dance of the seven veils.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham DB 21149

Walton: Façade Suite.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Lambert DX 1734-6

Violin Concerto.

Heifetz, Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Walton DB 21257-9*

PIANO

*Bach-Kempff: Siciliana, and**Bach-Hess: Jesu, Joy of man's desiring.*

Lipatti LB 109

Bach: Partita No. 1 in B flat.

Lipatti LX 8744-5*

*Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor.**Prelude and Fugue in D major.*

Schnabel DB 9511-2

Beethoven: Sonata in A flat, Op. 110. Bagatelle in B flat, Op. 119.

Friedrich Gulda AX 396-8

Brahms: Rhapsody in G minor, Op. 79, 2.

Schnabel DB 6504

Liszt: Consolation No. 3 in D flat.

Cherkassky DB 21183*

St. Francis preaching to the birds.

Kempff X 515*

Mozart: Sonata in A minor, K. 310.

Lipatti LX 8788-9

VOCAL

*Beethoven: Fidelio, "Gott welch dunkel hier", and
"In des Lebens Frühlingstagen".*

Julius Patzak, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Böhm .. X 489*

* Strongly recommended.

- Borodin: Prince Igor, Galitzky's aria, and*
Rimsky-Korsakov: Sadko, Song of the Viking guest.
 Christoff, Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Dobrowen DB 21127
- Donizetti: L'Elisir, "Quanto e bella", and*
Puccini: Turandot, "Nessun dorma".
 Gigli, Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Robinson DB 21138*
- Moussorgsky: Boris, Pimen's Monologue.*
 Christoff, Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Malko DA 1938
Khovantschina, Dositheu's aria.
 Christoff, Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Dobrowen DB 21207
- Mozart: "Ora pro nobis", K. 108, and*
"Voi avete un cor fedele", K. 217.
 Maria Stader, orchestra, c. Erismann C 4077
"Vorrei spiegarvi", and "Ah Conte, partite", K. 418.
 Maria Stader, orchestra, c. Erismann C 4056*
Così fan tutte.
 Excerpts from the Glyndebourne production (1950), c. Fritz
 Busch DB 21118-9*
- Schubert: Fahrt zum Hades, and Der Zwerg.*
 Theo Herrmann and Gerald Moore LX 1358*
- Verdi: Aida, "Fu la sorte dell'armi a' tuoi funesta".*
 Cigna, Elmo, EIAR Orchestra, c. Tansini R 30027
Falstaff, "Signore, v'assista il cielo!"
 Stabile, Poli, Nessi, Donaggio, Scala Orchestra, c. Erede GX 61009*
- Wagner: Lohengrin, "Treulich geführt".*
 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and Opera Chorus, c. Karajan LX 1360*
Parsifal, Good Friday Music.
 Ludwig Weber, Torsten Ralf, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra,
 c. Moralt LX 1394
Tannhäuser, March and Entry of the guests.
 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and Opera Chorus, c. Karajan LX 1347
 G. N. S.

RECORD KEY

Columbia: DX, LB, LX.
 Decca: AX, X.
 His Master's Voice: C, DA, DB, Z.
 Parlophone: R, SW.
 Telefunken (Decca): GX.

* Strongly recommended.

Correspondence

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13th June, 1951.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—Mosco Carner's observation (MR, XII/2, p. 107) on the text of Mátyás Seiber's *Ulysses*—"[It] might almost have stepped out of a text-book on natural science"—is surprising. I find it difficult to understand how Dr. Carner's musical ears can have resisted the exceptionally musical appeal of Joyce's highly poetic prose.

In a qualifying footnote, Dr. Carner points out nevertheless "that the composer wholly disagrees with my view as to the uninspiring quality of the better part of his text". In this connection it is of substantial interest to refer to the composer's comments which appear in his own analysis of *Ulysses* (in *Music Survey*, IV/4/51).

First he discusses "the terrific impact" the relevant passages from Joyce's novel made on him, and continues:

"I felt as if somebody had expressed in the most perfect form my own feelings—that indescribable 'cosmic awe' which overcomes me (and probably most people) when confronted with the starlit sky, and which, had I the power of words, I probably would have described in a similar way. At the same time I knew that I had stumbled on a passage which I simply *had* to set to music—I have not felt such strong compulsion ever before or after. To my mind these passages cried out for musical setting and they appeared to me the most perfect text any composer could wish for."

Mr. Seiber concludes his article as follows:

"Some critics complimented me that I was able to do something with this 'intractable', 'indigestible' and 'uninspiring' text. Whilst I am flattered by their compliments, I must, most respectfully, refute them. Quite the reverse, I feel that in composing the music I hardly had to do more than follow the words' lead and inspiration. Whatever the merits of my music may be, I feel, very humbly, that it can never measure up to the greatness, to the perfection of Joyce's masterpiece."

The divergence of opinion between composer and critic could hardly be more emphatic. I remain utterly baffled that Dr. Carner, who so keenly admires the Cantata itself and is able to write a perceptive analysis of it, should yet be able completely to misunderstand the text, which, as we can see from the composer's own words, was the very powerful main-spring of his musical invention. This conflict of opinion seems to me to pose a critical (if eternal) problem. How vital is a full comprehension of the text to a complete understanding of the music?

Yours faithfully,

DONALD MITCHELL.

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